A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

Tracy Johnnette Gavins

Bachelor of Science Business Administration, Strayer University, 1999
Master of Science in Accounting, Strayer University, 2004
Master of Business Administration, Strayer University, 2005
Master of Divinity, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology,
Virginia Union University, 2011

Mentors
Millicent Hunter, D. Min.
Derrick Johnson, D. Min.

A FINAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May, 2014

United Theological Seminary
Dayton, Ohio

Faculty Approval Page
Doctor of Ministry Final Project

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Mentors
Millicent Hunter, D. Min.
Derrick Johnson, D. Min.

Date: _____

Approved:

_____

_____

Faculty Mentor:

_____

Interim Dean of Doctoral Studies

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ABSTRACT

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Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Ministry is the context of this ministry model. The researcher observed individuals volunteering to teach but lacking instructional creativity. This ministry model is designed to empower teachers to utilize different tools, resources and methodologies when teaching children. The expectation is that if teachers are equipped and empowered to employ accessible methods to teach, attract and retain children's involvement, by means of visual mechanism and multimedia, this would ultimately transform the lives of the children. A qualitative methodology consisting of questionnaires, interviews and observation tested the teacher's increase knowledge of instructional creativity and biblical methodologies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the Glory….

It is with great pleasure that this inspiring paper was made possible through hard work and sheer persistence.

Thank God for allowing me the endurance and determination during my journey of completion. Without God it would have been impossible to remain focused.

Deepest appreciation and gratitude is expressed to individuals who provided encouragement and inspiration while developing this ministry model. To all of the individuals I say, "Thank you.

Dr. David A. Rusk, (*Faculty Consultant*), United Theological Seminary

Delman Coates, Ph.D., *(Senior Pastor),* Mt. Ennon Baptist Church

Dr. Nathaniel West *(Professional Associate)*

Dr. Markita S. Hawkins *(Professional Associate)*

Reverend Irene Ford-Smith *(Context Associate)*

Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Ministry

To God be the Glory!!

This ministry model is finished but the implementation is just beginning.

DEDICATION

My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the one who listened when times were hard and sent individuals to encourage me when I wanted to give up.

Delonte' Carlyle Gavins, my son, who stood by me through this doctoral program. Without your love, understanding, support and encouragement the road to completion would have been almost impossible.

Elmira S. Hawkins, my editor, who received my phone calls, emails and text messages relating to the completion and the correction of this ministry training model. Thanks for letting me know that this project has come a long way and now it reads like a ministry training model.

To each of you, your love assisted the researcher throughout the many years of ministry and especially toward the realization of this Doctorate Degree.

Peace and blessings to you all.

You are a teacher when you share yourself and your faith with others.

- Donald L. Griggs

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that from the earliest days our ancient Hebrew ancestors saw teaching as a central task of the household of faith. But what defines teaching? How can one understand the importance of teaching? Too often when we think about teaching in the church, the question becomes, where do we start and how do we do it. While it is certainly important to think about how we teach, it is also vital that we think about what teaching is. Certainly, what we think it is will shape how we do it![1]

The problem with teaching in the church is that a majority of people who want to be teachers do not consult God about the gift of teaching. The truth is that one does not become a teacher unless approved by God. Often those who are given the responsibility of Christian education are not trained in pedagogy or methods in Christian education.

This ministry training model explored additional ways to train teachers to utilize additional resources, tools and biblical methodologies for instructional creativity. It is designed to attract and retain children's involvement in the lesson. The focus of this ministry model trained teachers utilizing biblical teaching instructions which had been exemplified in the Bible. The model centered on teaching which means to impart knowledge, to instruct, to tutor, to educate, to inform, to enlighten, to train and to indoctrinate.

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[1] Karen B. Tye, *Your Calling as a Teacher* (Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2008), 5.

Because the researcher did not gain a good biblical foundation at an early age, she explored the area of teaching in an attempt to examine creative ways of teaching that would bring about involvement in the Christian education ministry. It is out of her personal commitment to furthering the kingdom of God that this researcher came upon the teaching ministry.

There is a great need for training and empowering teachers on how to deliver an effective curriculum that focuses on the spiritual aspect of a child's development. The importance of teaching is something which cannot be overemphasized. If teaching was not important, Jesus, the master teacher, would not have introduced it in the Bible. In the *Art of Jesus as a Teacher* McCoy states that "The way Jesus taught is a goal and a model for all Christian teachers. As meticulously as we can, we are to teach as Jesus taught . . . The way Jesus taught is our criterion. It is the standard by which we are to judge our teaching."[2] Throughout His life and teaching ministry Jesus demonstrated a remarkable love for His people, He was very patient with His pupils and displayed the utmost consideration, and repeated his lessons over and over again until they were completely mastered.

Mt. Ennon Baptist Church, a place "For People on the Grow!" served as the ecclesial context which was under examination in the ministry model. It has been stated that, Mt. Ennon is not satisfied with just having members. The belief is that "discipleship" is what the Lord requires! It is the church's goal to see that each new disciple/member has a firm foundation on which to build and establish the Word of God.

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[2] Charles Francis McKoy, *The Art of Jesus as a Teacher* (Philadelphia, PA: The Judson Press, 1930), iv.

However, the decline in Christian education is one of the worst kept secrets in the Church. In recent years, traditional Sunday school and educational programs have declined in influence and effectiveness. Education in the church is often sidelined by other competing priorities, and our efforts to teach have become less effective. As a result, many Christians have not learned the fundamental doctrinal content of the faith.

Where are all those teachers who used to enjoy teaching and the children who used to be excited about Christian education? Is it possible that some of the reasons for the decline in Christian education are?

- Curriculum is outdated and irrelevant
- Poor teacher preparation
- Lack of Bible literacy
- Bored students and teachers
- Classroom atmosphere is not stimulating or creative

This has caused the researcher to recognize the need to assist teachers in their endeavors as they seek to teach in a way that would result in spiritual growth, discipleship, liberation and transformation in the students.

The good news is that there are several ways one can correct the above issues and concerns. Teaching Christian education through the use of visual mechanism like power point, charts, diagrams, pictures, written instructions and course materials, are a few examples. Also, Bible stories and concepts can be taught through the use of multimedia workshops: drama, music, games, audio visual, puppets, storytelling, computers, and other educational media. The researcher hypothesized that this would ultimately translate

into spiritual growth, greater faith and transformation of the children lives because their teachers are better equipped.

Children of the 21st century are far more advanced in the area of technology. They are known as the generation who utilizes Google, Bloggers, Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, Face Time, Vine and Twitter. They are connected through all kinds of wireless devices. A congregation that focuses on connectivity is interested in the way individuals become followers of Jesus.[3] How can teachers compete with the ever-present effects of the media? As an educator, one must be able to leverage these collaborative tools to enhance and captivate learners. A teacher for the 21st century and beyond must begin to adapt to the students' knowledge if they want to be more effective and creative.

To be a creative teacher, one must learn and adapt as the horizons and landscapes change. We are all afraid of change! When people suggest things need to change it feels like a personal attack. Teachers have to change and be agents of change, because God is always doing a new thing. The culture is always changing, and this means the church has to examine how it is communicating with those in the culture.[4] More and more African American congregations are facing a crisis in today's culture. Many are out of touch with the shifting culture. They are living in the past while the world moves forward at a speed of light.[5]

As change occurs, the teacher must be fluent in tools, resources and technologies that enable communication and collaboration. When in the classroom, they must know

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[3] F. Douglas Powe, *New Wine New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 81.

[4] Powe, 89.

[5] Powe, xi-xii.

how to facilitate, motivate and manage. While many believe the curriculum is an important factor in learning, there are more effective ways of teaching students.

Christian education is designed to develop in its learners a strong belief in dedication and knowledge of Jesus Christ so one can better know Him, reflect His image in the world, and bring others to Him. This must be done through consistent, creative, insightful, enriching, practical, cultural and contextual means of teaching Christian education.

The researcher created a model that challenged the teachers to teach utilizing new creativity by presenting lessons so that students would gain a desire to have a relationship with God. This training would allow the children the freedom to feel comfortable in sharing their experiences.

The overall aspiration was to create a method to bridge the gap between teachers in ministry and non-teachers who may be interested in teaching but have fears due to their lack of knowledge in the Word, or fear of not knowing how to deliver the curriculum in a creative and receptive manner.

Chapter one outlines insights into the researcher's spiritual journey and an explanation of the context for this ministry model. She also shares the insights that brought her to the ministry of teaching through her journey from being a child leading up to the call for ministry and ending with the call to do ministry. Throughout the chapter you are introduced to individuals who helped acknowledge and define the researcher's purpose as a Christian educator.

Chapter two provides literature on Christian education as the foundational discipline upon which this ministry model was based. The researcher analyzed literature and explored several models and scholarly work that focused specifically on teaching

children and creative teaching. She shared those areas, which held any relevancy to the methodologies for this ministry model. Various authors were examined such as Robert Stein, Paolo Freire, Donald Griggs, Kenneth Gangel, John Bracke and Karen Tye. All of these great authors have contributed to the critical study of teaching without confusing the message.

Chapter three provides relevant perspectives from scholars and diverse theologians relating to the area of teaching. This chapter develops and supports methods and examples of the effectiveness and power of teaching. The researcher offers an extensive examination of the role of teaching from 1520 to the 21st Century. The examination provides a reflection on the historical, biblical and theological foundations for the ministry focus to establish and construct the ministry model. It includes the importance of practical teaching and the role that Jesus, the Master teacher, played in teaching.

By using scripture, the researcher based her theory on the Old Testament biblical foundation taken from Deuteronomy 6:6-9, the story of Moses giving instructions to God's people about what God expects as it relates to teaching children. It offers clarity as it speaks directly to the importance of instilling a biblical foundation in children. In the New Testament, Mark 8:14-21 is where we find Christ as the example bringing about the truth and clarity of God's Word. The text substantiates Jesus as the Master teacher who engages the learner in reflecting, questioning, discussing issues and reinforcing biblical principles.

Chapter four identifies the qualitative methodology and the ministry project design that was employed for the implementation and assessment of the ministry model. To create this model seven training sessions were held. Direct observation, questionnaires

and surveys bolstered the qualitative approach for the model of ministry. Included with the research method, the project design was introduced, along with a time line for the implementation.

The project design includes the Hypothesis, Description of the Ministry Project, Research Design, Measurement and Instrumentation. The model began with a pre-test questionnaire to examine the participant's knowledge of teaching methods. This information allowed the researcher to understand existing problems teachers were facing and identify their uncertainties of utilizing additional tools, resources and methodologies. The results of the ministry model were shown through the use of a post-test questionnaire utilizing the same statements as written in the pre-test.

The hypothesis for this ministry model was based on the transformational teaching theory that teachers will begin utilizing the new tools, resources and methodologies for engaging students in the lessons.

Chapter five, the implementation phase served as the focal point for the researcher's field experience. The results gained during each phase of the project will be deliberated in this chapter. Along with, an overview of the ministry model field experience process, including actual implementation as well as an outline of the training material that was utilized. The researcher expounds on the data collection methods that were used and illustrated the data analysis.

Chapter six provides critical assessment and reflections on the field experience finding and conclusions from the ministry training project. It contains new insights, ideas, and challenges encountered during field experience and project implementation. The researcher offered suggestions of what could have been done during the implementation of the model. The ministry model was also restated in such a way that it gave a very clear

understanding of the project. Finally, her own theological reflection and recommendations for future research has been shared.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Tracy Johnnette Gavins (the researcher), born in Washington, DC Metropolitan Area is the youngest of eight siblings. The researcher realized that being the youngest of eight was exhilarating as well as a hurtful journey. She was the last to do everything, receive everything, and depended on her siblings for everything.

She was raised in a very affluent neighborhood and attended the most prestigious schools. As a result of her upbringing, she discovered that things are not always as they appear to be, so never judge a book by its cover. As a child, her parents instilled in her the importance of education. As a result, she maintained straight "A's" during her years in school.

The researcher's father was Baptist, her mother was Catholic and she attended an Episcopalian church. This was the beginning of an unstable biblical foundation. The researcher never received a strong foundation in the Word of God as a child, but she liked what she heard about a God who could do anything but fail.

At the age of fourteen, she would go to school in the day and work in the evening. While working as an assistant bookkeeper, Mr. Steinberg, a Jewish owner of the company taught her a very inspiring lesson. He said, "In order to be successful in life you will have to work hard at it." During that time, she did not know the significance of those

words, but has taken his advice and have been working hard ever since those words were spoken.

Due to the fact that the researcher maintained straight "A's", recruiters from Harvard University and other prestigious universities spoke with her mother in reference to her attending their university. She remembers her mother respond with a "no" because she is too young to be around people older than her age. At that time, the researcher did not understand the impact of saying "no" would have on her future. As the researcher got older she realized that opportunities like that do not come every day, especially for African Americans.

In May 1981, the researcher graduated from H. D. Woodson Senior High School. Because she had no money but wanted to attend college, she enrolled at the University of the District of Columbia. This University did not compare to Harvard or Princeton league but she was determined to attend college and earn a degree.

The researcher tried to complete her college studies but the stress of study without a stable home was more than she could handle. She recalls writing her first paper in English entitled "Why Me? I Can't Cope" This paper was actually used as a way to express her feeling and a cry for help. Since the researcher was not a problem child, she could not understand why she did not receive help, guidance and support during her time of need.

In 1991, her sister gave her a Bible which had Proverbs 3:5-6 written on the inside cover page, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."[6] The

[6] Prov. 3:5-6 [King James Version].

researcher was upset after receiving the Bible, because she needed a place to live not a Bible with words. She opened the Bible and began reading that verse. It was then that she reflected on the words of Mr. Steinberg, "If you are going to succeed, you have to work hard." At that point she relied on the wisdom from a Jewish man and the Word of God.

She went to church in order to fill the emptiness and void from all the pressures endured from the past years. It was at that point she began to get excited about God and made the decision to stay close to God. As she began studying the Bible she felt a sense of peace. It made her feel like she did not have to worry about the things of her past. She focused on God, had patience, and waited for God to do whatever He wanted to do in her life.

The researcher would spend time at church because it was a place where she received comfort. She joined several ministries in order to stay active and close to God. Up to this point she relied on the voices of every person that had an opinion. But one day she decided to sit still and listen to what God had to say.

In 1992, at Paramount Baptist Church, in SE Washington, DC the researcher finally obtained a good biblical foundation. She was offered an opportunity to teach the youth and young adult class. The class was left without a teacher because it was said that the children were disruptive. The researcher responded by saying that there is no such thing as a disruptive child but there are those who have become misguided due to different life altering factors. This includes peer pressure, broken family relationships and even absent parents.

The pastor instructed the researcher to pray and read James 3:1 "Be not many (of you) teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."[7] Once the researcher read the text she became afraid of having lives in her hand and being judge. But since she loved studying and teaching she accepted the responsibility. Because the researcher had experienced and overcome many hurts and pains she could offer first-hand experience to the class. She could teach them how to deal with and overcome challenges and obstacles using God's Word.

As a teacher, the researcher realized that she had to choose whether to keep serving God or continue to do the things that were not pleasing to Him. As she developed a relationship with God she soon discovered He had greater plans for her life. The conviction she felt from the struggle of doing things her way and not doing things God's way gave her the strength to overcome. It was at that point God allowed her to begin the process of liberation.

At the age of thirty-two, the researcher began attending a noon day prayer ministry called "A More Excellent Way." There she realized the calling on her life was not only to teach the Gospel but also to preach the Gospel. For several years friends, family members, co-workers, Sunday school teachers, pastors and ministers told her that she had a calling on her life. She would get excited about sacrificing her lunch hour to teach and preach God's word to others who were also excited about the Lord.

By teaching God's Word it helped her to understand what people were saying about the calling on her life. First she had to understand that the "call" is nothing more than an urging that no one can make clear except the individual experiencing that call.

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[7] James 3:1 [King James Version].

There was this inner yearning that even if she tried to explain it others would not have understood it. She began to develop feelings of frustration, anxiety, disbelief, anger, denial and grief. She also experienced a period of isolation, loneliness and confusion. Finally, she went through the stage of "just not being sure,"

There were several times the researcher shut down and avoided doing the work of the ministry. However, God continued to use her while at the same time purging her. God continued to place people in her path where she could not hide her gift of teaching. Due to the compassion she felt for others she continued to do the work of the ministry.

At the age of thirty-six, the researcher returned back to school to finish the degree she started at the age of seventeen. Returning to school was an exciting time since she is an advocate of education. During her college years Dr. Awa, her favorite professor, inspired the researcher to push herself to great limits and take all challenging classes in order to learn more and enhance her critical thinking.

In 1999, while attending Strayer University, the researcher was overwhelmed with excitement when she received a letter indicating she would be recognized for outstanding merits and accomplishments in the Who's Who among Students in American Universities and College. During that same year, her son (Delonte') received a letter from William J. Clinton, President of the United States for outstanding academic achievement for the Presidential Education Award Program. As a result of hard work the researcher's son was selected to attend the University of Florida at the age of fifteen. That reminded the researcher of when she had the opportunity to attend college at that same age. The difference between her experience and her son is that she allowed him to attend the university.

In 2001, the researcher graduated at the top of her class from Strayer University with a 4. 0 GPA and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration. Not only did she get her Bachelor Degree the researcher continued higher education and earned three Master Degrees (Business Administration, Accounting and Divinity). She also earned several certifications in Information Technology and Project Management.

At the age of thirty-nine the researcher relocated to Florida and devoted time with God in order to hear his voice. It was at that time that God empowered her to continue to do the work of the ministry. The time spent with God allowed purging of bitterness, frustration, hurt, pain, abandonment and the feeling of being unloved. These were the obstacles that have been hindering the researcher from reaching the destination that God had designed for her.

One year later she left Florida and returned home excited to continue to do the will of God. She had the assurance that God called her into ministry and not man. She completely submitted her life to Christ and began to have a more intimate relationship with Him. She developed an uncompromising commitment to God and allowed Him to guide her while leaning and depending on God.

When the researcher decided to accept the call at the age of forty, she began questioning herself and asking "am I sure it's a calling and not something else"? Am I just accepting it because I have been hurt? Because of the deep hunger, thirst, and strong desire, she gained a deeper appreciation and understanding of God and His existence. It was evident that there was something she was supposed to be doing. From that point, she began committing her time to fasting, praying and meditating. This helped prepare her for spiritual readiness and the challenges that she would encounter for saying yes to the call.

As the researcher critically reflected over her life and the situations that God allowed her to experience, she can say that it was all for the call to do ministry. She recognized and understood that her calling was definitely a gradual process and not an instant calling. She had to learn what to do with this call and then find out the purpose God had for her life. During this time she had to learn not to be so consumed with her own individuality but with the concerns and needs of others. Over the years she encountered many struggles as she began to do the work of the ministry. She realized that all the struggles were merely a preparation for and confirmation of her call to ministry.

The researcher thanks God that the Word has changed her. It is His ears that have listened to her. It was His hand that dried all her tears. It was His shoulder that was always there for her to lean on.

To further the call to ministry, at the age of forty-four the researcher enrolled at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology Virginia Union University. During that time she commuted two hours to school every weekend while working full time as a Project Manager. She also served in the children's ministry every Sunday and Wednesday as a Christian education servant leader. On May 14, 2011 she received her Master of Divinity degree.

Working in ministry has allowed her to become more humble. It taught her not to teach with the purpose of proving how smart she was but simply to build up the Kingdom of God. The researcher also learned that God's Word is designed to do a continual work on the mind, spirit, body and soul in order to make one whole and complete.

In lieu of how difficult it was to survive her years as a child, the researcher continued to teach and work with other young people to affirm that God has a plan

chosen for them to fulfill. She enjoyed providing the gentle healing and guidance that was missing in their lives. Every time she met a young person she explored what was going on with them by using simple open-ended questions which encouraged them to talk about what is going on in their lives.

The researcher felt that her childhood was not a healthy experience and that she was forced to mature at an early age. As a result, she thinks of herself as a child at heart. Jesus tells us to become as little children because they have this innocence and genuineness about them that is lovable. By teaching children and youth, it allowed her to enjoy the youthfulness that was taken away at an early age. The researcher brings youthfulness in the class and helps others to dream, to have the courage to launch out into new experiences.

Her relationship with God inspired her to not allow her circumstances to define her, but allow the work of God in her life to define her. She realized that the devastation of her past has no room for the dreams of her future. As a result of her past, she now understands that God was there, is there, and will always be there through every circumstance and situation. The trials, hurts, pain and tribulation she experienced was designed to empower her to be effective in ministry.

In August 2007, the researcher united with Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children Ministry as the Wednesday night Bible study servant leader. Like water, the ministry and members are constantly on the move. Since water is characterized by perpetual movement and progress, the ministry of Mt. Ennon resists becoming stagnant and stationary as they seek to serve the Lord and spread the love and good news of Jesus Christ. They strive to do everything with a purpose. This includes the logo that connects

the church's graphic brand with the biblical reference where the church's name is derived. The geometric waves in the church's logo symbolize the water baptism referenced in John 3:23. There are three waves for each person of the Godhead; one for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit. The pastor seeks to remain constantly open to the move of the Holy Spirit and the leading of the Lord. Like water, the ministry and members are constantly on the move.

As you look at its history, geographical context, membership data and the make-up of the congregation you will discover that Mt. Ennon has a rapidly growing membership of over 8,000 where the median age is about 39 years old. The congregation is made-up solely of African-Americans who are diverse in age. Some working class citizens consist of Doctors, Lawyers, Military, Entrepreneurs and a host of other professionals.

The congregation ranges from newborn to age seventy-seven with 20% seniors, 30% adults, 20% young adults, 10% youth ages 13 thru 18 and 20% children ages 12 and under. Currently there are well over 1,500 youth and children in attendance. Mt. Ennon prides itself on investing time and money into the children and youth of the church since they will carry on the next generation of ministries at the church. The love that is exemplified in the church makes everyone feel like they are part of the family.

Mt. Ennon believes "that scripture is the authority on matters of faith and practice." The church also believes that the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible should have the place of pre-eminence in the church, home and each person's life. The members also

believe that they are commissioned by our Saviour to . . . "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The senior pastor Delman Coates has led the church to embrace the vision statement that we are "A Caring, Christ-Centered, Community Church, with a Kingdom Agenda." As a reflection of that vision, the church incorporated the Mt. Ennon Development Corporation for social service and community outreach initiatives. The spiritual foundation of the church is experienced through relevant preaching, teaching, worship, innovative ministry, and a focus on congregational care. The ministry's mission is to be fully committed to developing believers to live victorious Christian lives through a personal, authentic relationship with God.

To sum up the experience at Mt. Ennon she would say, "You have to experience it to understand it." Once you become a part of the worship experience it is hard to leave because of the love, care and compassion that the congregation displays. The members are encouraged to love everyone as Christ loves the church.

There was many times the researcher contemplated as to why God placed her at such an awesome church, with such an enormous group of children. The researcher believes God led her to Mt. Ennon because of her unconditional love for children and the many years of experience she gained in the area of teaching, caring, sharing, embracing and loving children. Her personal experience with abandonment, abuse, neglect, isolation, hurt, and pain have helped her to understand the purpose for serving as the children's servant leader. Since love and a biblical foundation were never cultivated in

the researcher's life, it led her to reach out to children and provide love and a sound foundation.

Before coming to Mt. Ennon, the researcher attended other churches where she gained a biblical foundation and had opportunities to attend Christian education classes. As a result, she was instrumental in teaching children from the Washington Metropolitan Area the Word of God at Youth Retreats and Boot Camp. This experience has given the researcher ample opportunities to share personal experiences with the hopes that children will not travel down the road of destruction. There is this loving excitement the researcher receives when she gets the opportunity to transfer information in order to help others come into the knowledge of God.

As the researcher taught and listened to the children, she soon discovered that there are a lot of children experiencing some of the same feelings that she felt at their age. She was raised in a house where on the outside everything appeared to be beautiful, but on the inside there was little to no love, compassion or care being exemplified. The researcher's past personal experiences afforded her the opportunity to minister to the personal needs of children who are experiencing or have experienced the same feelings.

In today's society, there are countless numbers of young people whose lives have taken a wrong turn and are headed down a path of destruction. As a result, compassionate teachers are needed to take these young children under their wings and nurture them into a healthy productive lifestyle.

There were many days the researcher went to school with tears in her eyes for one situation or another while trying to maintain focus. Many youth are at an intersection in their life where they are looking for freedom from hurt, neglect and abandonment. If they

could receive love, and compassion from the church or someone in the community, this could give them a sense of peace to enjoy the life that God has designed for them.

Often times, parents put their jobs before their children, leaving them with the sense that no one really cares. The average young person has all the latest gadgets, cell phone, IPods, IPads, video games, big screen TVs which have basically become a replacement for the love and affection that is needed. Children are smiling on the outside but internally are crying out on the inside. This is a vital time when children need adults to care and protect them from the circumstance and situations that they may face in the world. All the love that God has instilled within the researcher has become a useful tool for embracing and showing the children love and making them feel appreciated and valued in life.

Many young people go through life feeling discouraged about themselves and thinking they do not have a purpose in life. However, that's not true. We all have the responsibility to inform them that no matter whom they are or their life experiences, talents or physical ability they have a purpose. Other children are walking around wearing masks to try and cover the hurt and pain they are experiencing at school, home and even at church.

Let us not forget those who are feeling isolated and not reaching out to other people. Our young people will outright tell you that they do not trust anyone because they have been let down by their parents, church leaders, teachers and even their siblings. Therefore they spend a lot of time alone wondering when things are going to change and when it will end. For some, just sitting under the researcher's ministry and hearing the truth about her own experience has given them hope and a change of attitude towards life.

There are many young people who feel like there was no hope since every road they travel end up at a dead end. What is interesting is the fact that there are churches practically on every corner. And some would argue that the church has failed to reach out to the young people. But the researcher would argue that the young people have failed to reach out to the church. As a result, there remains a high proportion in the faith community in the urban setting whose lives have failed to evidence liberation and the practice of transformation.

When the researcher began serving in the children's ministry in was in its infant stage. The teachers were teaching the old fashion way. Read a Bible verse and say what you think it says. The scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15 'to study to show ourselves approved, a workman needed not be ashamed, but rightly dividing the word of truth." If one does not study the lesson then they may enter into the classroom and say, let's read the verse and tell me what you think. This style is boring, not exciting, nor memorable to our children and does not allow one to be transformed in their minds and actions.

Since the researcher had several years of teaching experience she brought energetic and creative ideas for educating children. These ideas brought about purpose for edifying children's hearts and minds. These new ideas helped the children ministry get moving in a positive direction where growth was taken place and students were excited about attending.

The researcher identified areas of weakness based on the needs and interaction from the children. The first thing needed was a new curriculum that would address the current needs of the children and allow more interaction and dialogue from the children.

The current curriculum was not up to date nor was it written or geared toward African American children and their different issues.

Knowing how to recruit new teachers was also lacking. It takes a special person to tap into the hearts of children and help them to be transformed and overcome pain and discomfort. During recruitment the researcher noticed that there were many willing workers but the fear of not knowing how to teach is what kept them from coming forward. Teacher's training needed to be designed in a way that would build their confidence level and bring about excitement. As a result of effective teacher training, more teachers have come forward to teach in the children's ministry.

In addition, the researcher observed that there were no computers for the students or the teachers to utilize in the area where the kids were being taught. A new computer lab has been established for the children to utilize and learn how to research scripture and Bible stories. The teachers have also been trained on how to utilize technology when presenting the Word of God in a fun and exciting way.

As a result of utilizing the new curriculum, installing a computer lab and teachers training, the children have encouraged their parents to bring them to the children's ministry. It was also observed that teachers were not penetrating the hearts of students in a way that would stimulate and guide them to a renewed life in Jesus Christ. It is imperative that children be exposed to sound and accurate presentations of the word in order to bring transformation to their own situation.

There are a number of tools and appropriate methodologies that can be used to help children to have an understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the researcher will demonstrate them through the project that will be presented.

Due to the researcher's passion for learning and teaching, her aspiration is to begin writing Christian curriculums that will reach individuals where they are, and help them to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word.

As a result of the researcher's Doctoral education, the model equipped and motivated teachers to present the Word of God to the children on an age appropriate level. This was done through the use of visual mechanism and multimedia. Since God is not dead but alive, our teaching needs to reflect that same image, life not death.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Children's ministry is being pushed and pulled by education models, statistical analysis, growth techniques, cultural change and technological advancements. But with the weight of all these influences, little attention is given to what ought to be the most important influence in molding the shape of children's ministry, the Word of God.

In the words of Walter Brueggemann, "Every community that wants to last beyond a single generation must concern itself with education. Education has to do with the maintenance of a community through the generations."[1] As a result, the researcher used Christian education as the vehicle to equip urban teachers for more effective ministry and outreach in urban communities locally and throughout the world. The researcher believes, that if one can grasp the understanding that Christian education serves as a method for providing an effective witness of the Good News, then it becomes readily apparent that education, especially Christian education, is an indispensable tool in the journey of faith.

If the urban church is to be equipped with the tools to live out her mission and reach the world for Christ, Christian educators are required to respond in an affirmative way to their obligations. To consciously involve themselves and their students in an empowering training that emphasizes teaching and learning is simultaneity.

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[1] Walter Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1982), 1.

The church has a responsibility to properly educate children in the Word of God so that the church may live in the tradition of teaching and imparting knowledge in our young people. As Carlyle Stewart stated in his book *The Empowerment Church*,

> The purpose of the church is simple: the church exists to bring people salvation in Christ, and to positively and permanently change lives for the good of the community. The way the church fulfills this basic calling is through empowerment, endowing people with the capacity to be recipients and catalysts of positive social and personal change.[2]

Many authors speak about the learner in the 21st century, but what about the teacher and their presentation of information to the students in the 21st century? What characteristics should we expect to see in a successful 21st century teacher? The researcher believes that they should be highly effective teachers who are able to adapt the curriculum in a creative and imaginative ways.

It is critical that teachers are not be chosen because they have outgrown the children's classes, or because there is nothing much else in the church for them to do. It would be better to have fewer teachers than poor, untrained ones. If the children ministry only wants bodies to fill slots, then we are doing the education of the children a disservice and cheating them out of the opportunity to gain a good biblical foundation. Untrained teachers will only produce untrained students.

Teachers have to understand the children home situations and interests. Good teachers will control by presence rather than by threats. They will work hard to prepare an interesting lesson; they are able to adapt themselves to different situations (as when a kid is angry or grieving or curious); they will do interesting things with their class; and

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[2] Carlyle Fielding Stewart, *The Empowerment Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 15.

have a sense of humor as well as vary in their delivery approach (videos, team- teaching, object-lessons, etc.).[3]

Today, education is comprised of three basic components: philosophy, curriculum and methodology. Likewise, each and every subject that is studied has a unique philosophy (presupposition truths), curriculum (content) and methodology (application). Philosophy gives rise to both the curriculum and the methods used in studying (teaching and learning). A curriculum should be lively and appropriate to the needs of the learner, as well as to the needs of the audience. It must be academically sound and based upon truth, not on prejudice or biased point of view. The scope of the curriculum is the breadth and depth of the content to be studied and should always be age ability-appropriate, while providing the challenge needed to stretch the able mind.

According to Paolo Freire, engaged pedagogy perceives education as a method of teaching and learning that empowers the people to develop their own power to perceive critically the way that they exist in the world with which, and in which, they find themselves. The people need to view the world and their condition not as a static reality, but as a reality that is continuously in the process of transformation.[4]

By educating the minds of the teacher with biblical truths, the church will have created a standard of teaching in response to utilizing creative teaching methods. There are many questions the researcher will address for the sake of this theological context. Why is Jesus methodologies necessary in teaching? Why is creative teaching necessary

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[3] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* 30th anniversary ed. (New York, NY: Continuum, 2000), 8.

[4] Freire, 12.

but lacking today? Why are our children not being transformed in the classrooms in order to transform the world? The severities of these questions require both spiritual and doctrinal response.

Some people probably remembered lessons at schools, which were not interesting and they switched classes because of how and what was being taught. This probably happened because of the instructors' lack of involvement, or the lessons were boring and were not emotionally engaged. In contrast, there were some classes which students were amused, moved, stimulated and challenged. It seems quite clear that those lessons involved not only fun, but also better learning. It left the student wondering how the teacher got them engaged and empowered them to learn.

Sue Miller sums it up best when she says; the need for ministry creativity grows as other sensory stimulation increases throughout the world. For kids, television creates a high excitement expectation, video games offer virtual adventure, and the media targets children with compelling messages. A dull Sunday school lesson, no matter how relevant, will not get children's attention; it will simply give them a reason to dread church. The solution is to apply creativity to teaching the Bible so that kids "get it" rather than "endure it."[5]

Few teachers realize how critical it is to start developing a child's biblical worldview from the very earliest years of life. The church has often focused on the older youth not realizing that a child's moral development is set by the age of nine. It is important for Christian educators to discover the divinely ordained process by which

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[5] Sue Miller and David Staal, *Making Your Children's Ministry the Best Hour of Every Kid's Week* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 74-75.

individuals grow in Christ. Teachers must recognize the need to equip children in order that they may become spiritually mature.

The children's ministry is solidly grounded in our theological understanding of the gospel of Christ and the place of children in the community of faith. The challenge is to keep central our commitment to the God of the scriptures while connecting to the real lives of children in ways that are meaningful for them to determine what God expect of us in and for our time.[6]

It is the educator who chooses the best means adapted to his subject and their audience and their circumstances. The teacher must realize that teaching involves much more than merely delivering the mandatory curriculum. It is about getting a student to think for themselves, and to look at the world around them in a much more profound manner.

In Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, he discusses the various complexities of teaching the truth of God's Word without confusing the message. He writes:

> To capture the attention of unbelievers like Jesus did, we must communicate spiritual truth the *way* he did. Jesus, not anyone else, must be our model. Unfortunately, some homiletics books pay more attention to Aristotle's methods and Greek rhetoric than how Jesus taught.
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> John 12:49 Jesus admitted, "The Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it". Notice that both the content and the delivery style of Jesus' teaching were directed by the Father.[7]

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[6] Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 110-111.

[7] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 223.

By exploring the thoughts of the importance of utilizing practical methods for Christian educators, one will be able to understand that practical teaching is one of the effective tools for teaching children. As its name implies, practical teaching is the study of theology in a way that is intended to make it useful and applicable, in order that it is relevant to everyday concerns.

The teacher must utilize informal teaching in order for more participation and interaction, which ultimately leads to opportunity for application. It is taking advantage of the teachable moments that arise in everyday life. In a Christian context this implies looking for opportunities to engage the learner in reflecting, questioning, and discussing issues and help the student discover or reinforce biblical principles. [8] If a student is not engaged in discussion, how will the teacher know if they have gained or even retained the information that was being presented?

Bell Hooks, states in her book, "*Teaching to Transgress*," that the teacher must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic and that everyone contributes. Showing concern and respect for your students and their student learning is a productive way of teaching. Hooks also states that it is rare that teachers, no matter how eloquent, can generate through his or her actions enough excitement to create an exciting classroom. [9] The teacher needs to get students to think and participate in class, which will add to the value of their learning and make the lesson more enjoyable and exciting.

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[8] Gary C. Newton, *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 84-85.

[9] Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 28.

Teaching directly from a curriculum will not get students very far when presenting the lesson. There are far better ways of teaching. While many teachers may believe curriculum is an important factor in teaching and learning, they often do not impact learners due to drawn out, mindless information that is essentially useless. Using good teaching strategies is vital to students. The way students learn will follow them the rest of their lives and it will show in the way they learn, their work ethic, and how they can cooperate with other people.

If one is not sure how to teach, effective teaching can be learned from the ministry of Jesus who was also a teacher, one who spoke with authority (Matthew 7:28) and boldness (John 7:26). His teachings was based on the scriptures (Luke 24:27) and read for Himself regularly (Luke 4:16-21). He exercised wisdom, speaking a "word in season" to the right people at the right time (John 16:12), as they were able to hear it (Mark 4:33). Also, Jesus' teaching interested the crowds, for He ministered under the anointing and as a result people were attracted to hear the Word of the Lord. The people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God (Luke 5:1). They were very attentive and literally, "hung on to his every word, (Luke 19:48). They were "astonished at His doctrine." (Matthew 7:28). His teachings "stirred up the people" (Luke 23:5), and he did not speak of Himself but spoke only what the Father directed him to say (John 8:28).

When Jesus taught he used methods but was not bound to any one method. He moved comfortably from the known to the unknown: from the simple to the profound; from the concrete to the abstract. A remarkable freedom appears in His methodological

skills and with a clear-cut objective. Jesus did not entertain the crowds but while teaching he was an educator who was committed to changing lives.[10]

In other words, whatever people will study about God shall be that which He revealed about Himself in the Scriptures. It is not setting out to search for God but setting out to search for that which God had revealed in His Word. The goal is to lead individuals to a biblical concept of God as the creator, Lord, and Redeemer. Ultimately, it should lead persons to the biblical concept of salvation, which can only be obtained by grace.

Not only did Jesus meet the audience he also used different methods for reaching them by speaking metaphorically, in parables. To fishermen He spoke of nets (Luke 5:1-11). To farmers He spoke of the seed of the Word (Mark 4:26-29). To the woman at the well He spoke of living waters (John 4:6-14). Finally, scripture depicts Him in a sitting position when He taught. This was the customary posture of the teacher (Luke 10:39) and symbolized His coming down to their level.

Jesus began where people were; with their questions, needs, hurts and concerns. He knew how to listen to people and key off their comments. He could adapt to the issue of the moment. Lois E. LeBar, in his book, *Education that is Christian*, observes the fact that "Jesus usually started on a personal level because then the pupils connected His

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[10] Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard Hendricks, *The Christian Educators Handbook on Teaching: A Comprehensive Resource on the Distinctiveness of True Christian Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988), 24-25.

eternal truths with their own lives. The few times when He started on a content level, He continually related that content to the lives of His hearers. "[11]

Jesus' teaching was engaging. People do not think unless led to do so. Jesus does not merely solve problems for people. They are always involved in the process. He engaged people by presenting a problem, by asking an appropriate question, by using repetition, by telling a story or simply by maintaining silence.

Jesus' teaching was also developmental. His goal was to take people from where they were to where they ought to be. The conversation Jesus had with the woman of Samaria is an object lesson (John 4). Jesus tears down every barrier; cultural, social racial, sexual and religious and turns her into an evangelist in her community. Rebecca Pippert, in her book entitled, *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World,* observes the following:

> The Samaritan woman had five husbands and was currently living with a sixth man. The disciples took one look at her and felt, "That woman? Become a Christian? No way, why just look at her lifestyle!" But Jesus looked at her and came to the opposite conclusion. What Jesus saw in her frantic male-hopping was not just looseness. It was not her human need for tenderness that alarmed Him, but rather how she sought to meet that need. Even more, Jesus saw that her need indicated hunger for God. He seemed to be saying to the disciples, "Look at what potential she has for God. See how hard she's trying to find the right thing in all the wrong places."[12]

Bracke and Tye, offer teachers a guide to selecting methods and techniques. They state that; good teacher need a repertoire of methods and techniques from which they can draw for teaching. Those specific activities we used in the teaching moment. One needs

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[11] Lois E. LeBar, *Education that is Christian* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1958), 51.

[12] Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 42.

to consider some basic principles or guidelines to select the methods. What do we need to consider when we choose our methods and tools for teaching?[13]

1. Our methods, techniques and tools need to be appropriate for the content, context, and the people we teach.

   What is the text all about? What would be the most helpful way in which to engage it? Knowledge of the people we are teaching is also critical. Think carefully about children when teaching them. Arts and crafts projects are often a part of Bible study with young children. Think about our students, who they are; what their physical abilities, cognitive abilities, and learning styles are; how their brains work, making sure methods and students are compatible.

2. The broader the repertoire of methods, techniques, and tools we have, the better.

   A variety of methods is important. A key reason has to do with the people we teach. Because our students come with different abilities, learning styles, and so on, variety is essential to be able to engage them all in the learning process. Visual learners need to see pictures, illustrations, videos, displays, and demonstrations. Aural learners need to be physically engaged, involved in role plays and other hands-on activities. Interactive students need to work with others. The broader our repertoire of methods, the more likely it is that we will teach in ways that are appropriate for all our students.

3. Be familiar with and give careful thought to a new method, techniques, and tool before using it.

   It is important to know how to use the methods and tools we select. Methods take on a life of their own, and giving careful thought to where they might lead is important.

4. Remember that the purpose of a method, technique, or tools is to assist the student in learning.

   Certainly, methods are to help people learn. However, there are other reasons at work in selecting methods. These include (1) because 'we've always done it that way," (2) in order to "look good," and (3) to duplicate an experience. Sometimes we select a method simply because it is the one we always use, not because it helps us teach in ways that our students

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[13] John M. Bracke and Karen B. Tye, *Teaching the Bible in the Church* (Atlanta, GA: Chalise Press, 2003), 67-70.

> learn. We do not stop to ask whether it is appropriate for this content, context, and group of students. Sometimes a method is chosen because it "looks good." Duplicating experiences simply does not work and that choosing methods on that basis is not appropriate. Instead, the most important criterion for selecting our methods, techniques, and tools is whether they help the student we teach learn.[14]

The most basic method that needs to be in every teacher's repertoire is the use of questions. Questions are a core method of teaching. They are readily available, cost nothing in terms of money or resources, and can be used with all ages. But they do require some thought and preparation. Knowing how to ask the right question is important.

Throughout scripture, it is difficult to find Jesus ever doing the same thing in the same way. We see creativity in His use of questions. Robert Stein, in his book, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, says:

> He used questions in a variety of ways and in a variety of situations. One way in which Jesus used questions was by drawing from His audience the correct answer He sought. By being drawn out from the listeners rather than by simply being declared by Jesus, the correct answer was more convincingly and permanently impressed upon their minds. The turning point of His entire ministry centered around an incident in Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus asked His disciples:
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> "Who do men say that I am? And they told Him, "John the Baptist: and others say Elijah; and others one of the prophets. And He asks them "But who do you say that I am? Peter answered Him, You are the Christ. And He charged them to tell no one about Him.
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> "And He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly." (Mark 8:27-32)."[15]

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[14] Bracke and Tye, 67-70.

[15] Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus Teachings* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminister Press, 1978), 1.

6. Parables (John 10:1-21; 15:1-10) - Jesus taught by illustrating spiritual truth with familiar situations.
7. The teachable moment (4:5-26) – Jesus took every opportunity to make an ordinary situation a "teaching situation."
8. Concrete and literal examples (6:26-34) – Jesus used the concrete to teach abstract truths such as trust, greatness, hospitability, discipleship, etc.
9. Symbols (26:17-30; John 13:1-20) – Jesus used symbols, such as the Passover before His death and washing His disciples' feet, to teach great lessons.
10. Individual teaching opportunities (John 3:1-21; 4:4-26) – Jesus took the initiative in reaching out to individuals, helping them understand who He was and what He was going to do.

When it comes to teaching, the researcher is not just talking about Sunday school teachers. She is talking about people who lead Bible studies; youth groups, workshops, drama groups, men and women auxiliaries, and other educational programs. Anyone who fulfills such roles has a tremendous effect on educational effectiveness throughout a congregation, and is certainly a teacher.[17]

One of the best ways to affect the behavior of others is to passionately live the values you teach. According to Luke 6:39; Can one blind man be a guide to another? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A student is not superior to his teacher, but everyone, when his training is complete, will reach his teacher's level. When the teacher models the process of Christian growth, He can say like Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:7, "You know yourselves how you ought to copy your example."

God does not intend for one man and one woman to carry the full responsibility for children's spiritual formation. God's plan is that the faith community supports the family and together they nurture the children. Children need to see more adults living in

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[17] Eugene Roekhlkepartain, *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 100-101.

love and obedience to God in order that they can ask questions of people they admire and hear stories of God at work.

Teachers are like the narrow neck of an hourglass. Everything passes through them. When they are effective, learning flows freely and steadily. But when they are ill equipped, learning can be clogged up or only trickle through ineffectively. [18]

No matter how well other leaders in the congregation know educational theory and practice, or have developed in their own faith, the Christian faith will not be adequately communicated without effective teachers.

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[18] Susan Tiff, "Who's Teaching Our Children?" *Time Magazine*, November 14, 1988, 59.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

As the researcher continues to develop a ministry *Training Model that Equips Teachers Utilizing Biblical Methodologies to Increase Instructional Creativity*, it is imperative to examine the Old and New Testament concerning God's position on teaching children. This sector is designed to address ways in which teaching children with clarity and utilizing a creative approach can be both fun and educational.

To address the key areas affecting Mt. Ennon Children Church ministry context, the writer comprehensively discusses the biblical, historical and theological implications surrounding this project. In order to render a consistent method of Bible interpretation concerning teaching children, the writer will also present an Old and New Testament biblical model to produce a larger framework of explanation pertaining to teaching children.

The biblical foundation of teaching is as old as scripture itself. In order to achieve the essence of teaching; the foundation of biblical teaching is the key to training. When thinking about this chapter, teaching is actually a way of life. The Old Testament speaks to this concept of teaching and training of biblical truth which, when followed and obeyed, produces a life of survival and blessing.

Biblical Foundation

The Bible which is the foundation of Christian education has played a vital role in the life of African Americans. As a teaching source, the Bible, illuminates the mind, moves the heart, and stirs the soul.[1] Through the Bible, Christians learn who God is and what God has for them. Calling the Bible a spiritual tool allows us to focus on several of the most significant functions: scripture *as* story, scripture as message, scripture as liberation . . . and scripture as identity formation. [2]

According to Tiffany and Ringe's *Biblical Interpretation*:

> It is important to be up-front about our assumptions underlying this particular roadmap of biblical interpretation. First among them is the recognition that the Bible is a collection of documents written by human authors for specific human communities struggling to understand and express their own identity in relationship with each other and with God. That means that these documents are historically and culturally relative, and we must respect the specific social institutions and world views that underlie them. [3]

The objective of the biblical text is to draw out the methods which were used when it came to teaching children the biblical truth in a simplistic manner that would prepare them for life ahead.

God commands us to teach. This ministry is spelled out clearly in the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy (Gk., 'the second law'). The first five books of the Old Testament are commonly called the Law or the Torah (*tôrah*). 'Law' is a common translation for the Hebrew word *tôrah* in western circles and even in the LXX. It

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[1] Thomas H. Hill, *Religious Education in the African American Tradition: A Comprehensive Introduction* (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 28.

[2] Hill, 39.

[3] Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 14.

is equally feasible to translate the word *tôrah* as 'instruction'.[4] Deuteronomy was written in 7th century Before Christ. It is referred to as "this teaching" (*sefer ha-torah ha-za't*) or "this book of teaching" (*sefer ha-torah ha-zeh).*[5]

In the African American community, the family was the important place of educational activity and the church became the biblical training ground for the children. Although it is the family responsibility, the whole community must come alongside the parents to nurture the next generation together in the context of a symbolic relationship among the families in the community.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 it states:

> And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. [6]

This biblical foundation brings clarity for teaching children as it speaks directly to the importance of instilling a biblical foundation in children. An important demand of the covenant relationship was that it be perpetuated beyond the immediate generation of those with whom the Lord made. God's promises and provisions were for generations yet unborn. [7]

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[4] Heinz-Josef Fabry, and G. Johannes Botterweck, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* vol. 15, ed. and trans. by David Green and Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 609.

[5] Jeffrey H. Tigay, *JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary.* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), xi.

[6] Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (New Revised Standard Version).

[7] Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy,* The New American Commentary, vol. 4. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 166–167.

The researcher appreciates the way John Fuder wrote the text for modern translation in today's urban culture. In his book, *A Heart for the City*, he states:

> These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit in the inner city apartment and when you walk through the alleys, when you are playing hoops with them, when you lie down in the city parks and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your house and on your locked gates.[8]

In these passages, the Deuteronomist is interested in children. Moses was reporting to the people, God's "commandments and ordinances" so that "you and your children and your children's children, may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life." Moses exhorts the people to "keep these words" and to "recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away." In the article, Byars makes an important point, "Why is it so important to tell children the story? One reason is simple. We live in a culture that is both very secular and extravagantly religious, and each is potentially a threat to biblical faith."[9]

According to well-known author, Walter Brueggemann, he suggests that Deuteronomy asserts:

> The community is at risk when the younger generation is alienated. The text does not, however, settle for despair, but proposes the intentional reassertion of the memory of a source for a radically different future. Israel has always known that the claiming of the next generation is no automatic process but requires great intentionality. . . It is no wonder that the teaching tradition of Deuteronomy exhibited a deep sense of urgency in its strategy of saturation as it struggled for a glad assent of its own young. [10]

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[8] John Fuder, *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1999), 407-408.

[9] Ronald P. Byars, "Deuteronomy 6:1-15 (Between Text and Sermon)," *Interpretation* 60, no. 2 (April 2006): [194]-196.

[10] Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 85.

The text not only validates God's biblical perspective on teaching children, it also gives clear and concise instructions on when and how to teach. It illustrates different methods that can be used such as: sitting, walking, lying down and even when one rises up. According to *Deuteronomy's Interpretation Commentary*, instructions are given for remembering and teaching these great truths to the following generations. The reason for this emphasis on the children is clear. Deuteronomy is aimed at the next generation. It takes the present generation back to the past and brings the past into the present. The children are now the ones before whom all the choices are laid and someday their children will be there and the divine instruction will comfort them.[11]

Children have to be instructed in what is right and what is wrong as taught in the scriptures. Israel forgot to teach their children about the power and presence of God. How He delivered them from the hands and heart of a King who thought he was more powerful than God. Israel failed to instill character, integrity, and faithfulness to God in their children. As a result, Moses instructed the leaders of each family unit in ancient Israel to first model their faith in front of their children and to teach or impress God's commandments on them. Parents, grandparents, teachers and the village all have the responsibility to instill Godly character into children.

George Barna sheds some great insights about the average Christian in his book, *Vital Signs* he claims:

> The "average Christian" needs role models. Psychologists have learned that one of the ways that people grow is through the imitation of models. Christians have a disadvantage in this regard. Believers typically are unaware of any contemporary Christian individuals after whom they would pattern their lives;

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[11] Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 107.

> they are ignorant of the models that could be drawn directly from the Bible; or they deem Jesus as the only role model in Scripture whom they should attempt to copy.

Barna goes on further to state very simply:

> Christians must be challenged to increase their commitment to spiritual growth. Perhaps too often the ministry of the church stresses evangelism at the expense of discipleship. Recent converts and mature believers alike need to continually grow in their spiritual life; stagnation brings spiritual decline. Churches need to take seriously the business of edifying the flock, just as individual believers need to reaffirm their commitment to becoming Christ like. Christian principles must be practical with valid applications of those principles a central part of the teaching/learning process. [12]

The moral and biblical education of the children was accomplished best not in a formal teaching period each day but when the parents, out of concern for their own lives as well as their children's, made God and His Word the natural topic of a conversation which might occur anywhere and anytime during the day. [13]

Before Moses addressed the teaching of children, he first focused each person's attention on his or her own relationship with God. As noted in *Children Matters*, Moses identified three elements in the life of obedience to God that was fulfilling and winsome to others:

> First, the people need to know their God. Overtime, they will not obey unless they accept and give allegiance to the one Lord, their God. Second, Moses put before them the possibility of an obedience that flows from loving God completely, not a reluctant obedience but one motivated by love. Third, he challenges them to internalize God's laws, to meditate on them and make them their own. Then God's commands will become an inner guiding force, not just external restrictions. When obedience flows from a transforming love relationship

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[12] George Barna and William Paul McKay, *Vital Signs: Emerging Social Trends and the Future of American Christianity* (Ventura, CA: Good News Publishers, 1984), 145-146.

[13] J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Dt 6:6–9)* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983).

with God, others sense that love and are drawn to it. Such a relationship prepares a person for teaching the next generation. [14]

Moses also challenged them to internalize God's laws, meditate on them and make them their own. Talking about them informally throughout daily activities, and finally to post reminders of God's laws throughout the house. They are to be committed to memory as the expression "upon your hearts". To "be upon the heart" is to be in one's constant, conscious reflection. The heart is not the center of emotional life and response but in Hebrew the heart is the center of thought, of the intellect or rational side of humankind.[15]

One must impress the words of covenant faith into the thinking of his children by inscribing them with indelible sharpness and precision (thus the *piel* of *šānan*). The way this message is made indelible is by constant repetition. [16] Teach them diligently to your children, which in Hebrew means "repeat," or "say again and again"; this meaning is reinforced by the following shall talk of them. NRSV translates "Recite them . . . and talk about them"; REB has "repeat them . . . and speak of them," NJPSV "tell them . . . and keep on telling them."[17]

As noted in the *Pulpit Commentary*, the words of God were to be bound for a sign (a memorial or directory):

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[14]Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse and Linda Cannell. *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 33.

[15] Merrill, 167.

[16] Merrill, 167-168.

[17] Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 2000), 139-140.

> Upon thine hand, the instrument of acting, and to be as frontlets (fillets or bands) between thine eyes, the organs of direction in walking or moving and so on the forehead, the chamber of thought and purpose, and they were to inscribe them on the posts of their houses, and on their gates, The claim of this is that they were constantly and everywhere to have these commandments of the Lord in view and in mind, so as to observe them.

It further notes that:

> Where true love to God exists in the heart, it will manifest itself in regards to His will, and in the diligent keeping of his commandments. Hence, His words were to be not only in the memory of the people, but lay upon their heart, that they might be ever present to the thought and will. They were also to be inculcated upon their children, and to be the subject of conversation on all fitting occasions between them, the members of their household, and even their casual associates.[18]

The text moves from understanding the importance of teaching scripture to the importance of applying scripture. Whether sitting which suggests inactivity, or walking in the pathway. Lying down to sleep or rising for the tasks of a new day. Teacher and pupil must be preoccupied with covenant concerns and their faithful transmission. The covenant is so important that it must be at the very center of one's labor and life.

Just as the Deuteronomist was weary of the effects the Canaanite culture might have on the Hebrews and their children, one needs to understand the church and its faith as a counter-cultural movement in the sense of requiring a studied intentionality in reciting the story to our children and talking about it "when one is away, when you lie down and when you rise."[19]

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[18] H. D. Spence-Jones, *The Pulpit Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Chicago, IL: Wilcox & Follett Company, 2004), 119.

[19] Byars, 196.

According to E. H. Merrill, in his book, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary he notes the following:

> In what was apparently intended to be another figurative way of expressing the centrality of the covenant to everyday life, Moses instructed the people to tie the words of covenant to their hands and foreheads. The binding to the hands (or forearms, as *yad*), purpose is that the words might be "for a sign" (*lĕ'ôt*). They would identify their bearer as a member of the covenant community. The covenant words were also to be written on the doorframes of Israelite houses and on the gateposts of their villages.
>
> In post biblical practice, observant Jews placed a *mĕzûzāh* (the same word as that for "doorpost"), a small metal receptacle containing in twenty-two lines, at the right of the doorway in obedience to Moses' instructions. After ordering that the covenant commandments be worn on the person of the faithful Israelite, Moses expanded the sphere of covenant claim to the house and then to the village. In this manner the person and his entire family and community became identified as the people of the Lord. [20]

Parents were to remind their children of what God had done for the nation, just as Moses was reminding Israel of God's care. Verses 6–9 makes it clear that the Word was to be made a part of the home, the center of conversation, and the means of instructing the children to love the Lord and obey Him. Unfortunately, the Jews took the letter of this law and not the spirit, and ended up making little boxes containing passages from the Law. They wore these boxes on their arms and heads, but this did not mean they had the Word in their hearts. [21]

The *Teacher's Commentary* gives instructions about how one should display the Word, it states:

> First, we should take the words He speaks to us today, and write them "on our hearts." Memorization is not in view here. Instead the verse calls on us to make the Word of God a part of our lives: to let His teachings reshape our values and our attitudes and our ways.

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[20] Merrill, 166-167.

[21] Warren W Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Dt 6) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993).

> Second, we share that which has taken root in our lives with persons we are close to. *You* shall teach them (God's Word) diligently to *your* children. This speaks not only of a parent's responsibility in nurture, but of the nature of the relationship in which God's reality can be shared.
>
> Third, the context in which the reality of God is shared is that of daily life and activity. God's Word is the touchstone which guides us in life, and we refer to them to explain our actions, our attitudes, and all our ways. [22]

Deuteronomy calls for a response from the whole faith community. Parents have a significant role to play in the spiritual formation of their children. God does not intend for one man and one woman to carry the full responsibility for their children's spiritual formation. God's plan is that the faith community supports the family and together they nurture the children. The words written in Deuteronomy are still relevant to children's lives today. It can be the catalyst for spiritual evaluation and renewal of their lives. God is saying that no matter what one does, no matter what one says, no matter what comes in life, every day people should be reflecting on the mind of God, in speech, and in attitude.

In the New Testament, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is referred to as a teacher more than by any other title. The Greek word most often given to Christ, as an educational title, is *didaskalos*. This word is translated "teacher" or "master" and is found more than forty times in the Gospels. In the King James Version of the Bible, *didaskalos* is translated "master" rather than "teacher" because at the time of translation the word *master* was understood to mean "schoolmaster."[23]

Mark's Gospel teaches about the power and authority of Jesus, his readiness to act on behalf of people in need, his mighty works that testify to the coming of the reign of

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[22] Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 147-148.

[23]Norman DeJong, *Teaching for a Change: A Transformational Approach to Education* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2002), 54-55.

God. It illustrates how to engage the learner in reflecting, questioning, discussing issues and reinforcing biblical principles.[24]

Mark 8:14-21 is where we find Christ as the example to inspire teachers to bring about the truth when presenting the Word of God. In these verses, the Lord gives an example of Jesus warning His disciples about the bad teachings of the Pharisees. There are two major emphases pointed out: the leaven of the Pharisees and the misunderstanding of the disciples. [25] It states:

> Now the disciples had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And He cautioned them, saying, "Watch out, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." They said to one another, "It is because we have no bread." And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" And they said to him, "Seven." Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"[26]

And they had forgotten (ἐπελάθοντο)—literally, *they forgot*—to take bread (ἄρτους); *loaves*. The conversation which follows took place on the boat while they were crossing. The passage would take perhaps six hours. And it was during that time that they would want food; for when they reached the port, they would find it in abundance. [27]

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[24] Timothy J. Geddert, *Mark: Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 431.

[25] Lamar Williamson, Jr, *Mark, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1983), 143.

[26] Mark 8:14–21, (New Revised Standard Version).

[27] H. D. Spence-Jones, *The Pulpit Commentary: St. Mark,* vol. 1 (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909), 332.

After dismissing the four thousand, Jesus "immediately" gets into a boat with his disciples and goes to the district of Dalmanutha. The location of such a place is no longer known, although it is generally thought to be in Galilee on the sea. "The Pharisees came and began to argue with him . . . " (8:11). The Pharisees said if Jesus has so much authority, surely He can produce a sign from heaven, that is, from God. Jesus sighs. No such sign will be given, to them or to "this generation." To ask for a sign is to demand that divine power be present on one's own terms rather than to perceive it wherever it manifests itself."[28]

The disciples where not only witnessing Jesus' miracles and teaching, they also received special instructions. They seemed to be no different than the outsiders. Having eyes, they do not see; having ears, they do not hear. What reasons are given for their lack of understanding?[29]

The disciples cannot perceive the signs when they see them before their eyes? The answer here seems to lie in his warning about the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod. Because they had forgotten to bring bread . . . they thought he was warning them about being careful from whom they received bread.

Timothy Geddert, writer of *Watchwords*, gives us an answer according to his understanding, he notes:

> It is Jesus' attempt to instruct the disciples on how (i. e. , by what means) they are to understand parables. It is designed to instruct the disciples on the means by which true understanding is made possible. Jesus is not saying, 'Do you not understand the parable? Here let me tell you what it means'. He is saying, 'Do you not understand the parable? Let me tell you how you can'. The disciples are

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[28] Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 45.

[29] Donald, H. Juel, *The Gospel of Mark* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 186.

> clamouring for easy explanations. Jesus responds, 'What you need is not a point by point lesson on the meaning of each parable, nor on the nature of the kingdom. What you need are ears to hear its hidden message and eyes to see its hidden presence. [30]

Geddert further notes the quiz about the loaves and the leftover is designed to demonstrate that the disciples had no problem with data recall, leaving the alternative crystal clear . . . their spiritual perceptions were dull. However the disciples are not model pupils:

> Mighty works have been done in their presence, but they have done no better than to evaluate them with amazement and memorize the data for future reference. They do not understand the significance of what is happening; they are in danger of falling to the level of the Jewish religious hierarchy. They have failed to understand the first feeding. Jesus again miraculously feeds a multitude and wishes to guide the disciples in the way of understanding. [31]

Israel's religious leadership rejects Jesus, and He ceases to appeal to them. At this point, Jesus' primary concern shifts. Instead of instructing his opponents, Jesus exposes their hypocrisy. His positive appeals are reserved for those willing to accompany and follow Him. Along with the change in target group comes a change in teaching methodology. Jesus presents his teaching almost exclusively in parable with hidden meaning and miracles with hidden implications. Where explanations are given they are not normally exhaustive explanations of Jesus' hidden meaning. They are more often appeals to listen and see, with indicators as to what barriers will have to be overcome to render that possible. [32]

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[30] Timothy J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 72.

[31] Geddert, 66-68.

[32] Geddert, 79.

Jesus warns the disciples against demanding signs. It is a form of unbelief, and unbelief spreads and spoils, like yeast in flour. Jesus had created bread to show He was the Son of God, not so that they need not buy loaves any more. Both the Pharisees and the disciples are slow to understand the meaning of Jesus' miracles. [33] What did Jesus mean by the Pharisees' and Herod's yeast? Scholars have suggested that the yeast may stand for religiosity, legalism, nationalism, a failure to recognize and believe in Jesus, or wrong attitudes to Gentiles. Mark's context, however, points in another direction. The yeast has to do with demanding signs and understanding miracles. In this context, yeast is misunderstanding Jesus' miracles and falsely assuming He will produce miracles on demand. [34]

We can never be too careful about detecting and avoiding false doctrine. Only a small deviation from the Word may get into an individual or a church, but before long it will grow and infect everything. Our Lord did not often say "Beware!" but when He did it was important![35]

What then is the "yeast"? Yeast or leaven in the New Testament symbolizes the evil disposition in people. Therefore the yeast of Herod probably was also unbelief connected with miracles. He did not demand a miraculous sign, but he did misinterpret the miracles of Jesus. Jesus' purpose in mentioning the matter was to indicate that the disciples were dangerously close to unbelief. Alternately, Mark's reference is general: "Beware of the influence of the Pharisees and Herod." The warning to the disciples

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[33] Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 457.

[34] Geddert, *Mark*, 186.

[35] Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition* , 98.

concerned not only the evil influence of Herod (with which they were aware) but also the evil that characterized the Pharisees. [36]

As noted in the book, *Wuest Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, author K. S. Wuest, notes,

> It is clear that Jesus asks six intense questions that show His disappointment at the intellectual and spiritual dullness of His pupils (the Greek word mathētēs (μαθητης) "disciples," meaning learners). Jesus repeats their argument, and asks why they are reasoning along those lines. Have ye your heart yet hardened? The hardening process in the disciple's hearts had progressed to the state of completeness, and the present results constituted them as men who were in a state of settled hardness. And He said unto them, how is it that ye do not understand? Jesus finally had to explain to them that He was talking about the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. [37]

The disciples' hearts are still partially closed to the depth of Jesus' teaching and person, for He asks if they do not yet perceive or understand. Although Jesus does not rebuke them as hard-hearted "hypocrites" like the Pharisees and scribes, they still lack full understanding of who Jesus is. While the Pharisees reject Jesus' teaching outright, the disciples are slow to appreciate it. Jesus wants to open the "ears" and "eyes" of the disciples' hearts. [38]

It is not indicating that the disciples have three problems (faulty eyes, ears, and memory). Rather it is setting out two options. Either their spiritual perceptions are inadequate to lead them to understanding, or else they have not retained an accurate memory of what it is that they ought to be interpreting. [39]

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[36] James A. Brooks, *Mark: The New American Commentary*, vol. 23 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 129.

[37] K. S. Wuest, "Mark 8:12–17," *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).

[38] English Standard Version Bible, Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL

[39] Geddert, *Watchwords,* 67.

The first function of Jesus' question is to demonstrate the disciples' need for insight. They were present, they saw, heard, and participated. They recalled all the details: twelve baskets of leftovers after the 5,000 were fed; seven baskets after the 4,000 were fed. Their memories were flawless. Why then do they not understand? They are deaf and blind to the real significance. The disciples clearly do not see and hear. Yet in and around this text are two small signs of hope, hints that the disciples (and readers) can indeed come to understand. The first is in Jesus' final question: Do you not yet understand? That little word yet may register some impatience, but it also suggests that the disciples will someday come to understand. [40]

Patristic commentators such as Augustine and Bede interpreted the numbers allegorically so that the first feeding represented the Old Testament (five loaves and five thousand symbolizing the five books of Moses) and the second represented the New (seven loaves for seven graces of the Holy Spirit, four thousand for the church founded on four Gospels). In the twentieth century commentators have referred the numbers to Jews (twelve baskets for twelve tribes) and Gentiles (seven baskets for completion) of all humankind, or seventy Gentile nations. [41]

While all these meanings are present in the text and may be significant in a given situation, the text itself draws attention to the misunderstanding of the disciples and of the Pharisees and Herod. "Do you not yet understand" is the last and climactic word not only of this unit but of the entire first half of Mark. Two kinds of misunderstanding are challenged. The Pharisees respond to Jesus with judgmental hostility. Jesus denying their

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[40] Brooks, 130.

[41] Williamson, 144-145.

demand for a sign, in anger and in sorrow leaves them. The disciples respond with friendly dullness. Jesus does not give up on them, but his series of questions to them shows dismay at their understanding. [42]

It may take more than one touch, but in the end ears are indeed able to hear and eyes to see. That is what the disciples needed. Jesus will not give up on them until they understand. [43] The word "still" suggests that there was hope for the disciples, which they would yet understand. The question is for the readers/hearers of the gospel as well as the disciples. [44]

If, on the one hand, the disciples should have understood more than they did on the basis of their previous experience, on the other hand they cannot really understand who Jesus is till they have followed Him. Certain open-endedness in our understanding of who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him is therefore appropriate. For if, in one sense, Jesus' final question functions as a statement reproaching the disciples' present incomprehension, in a deeper sense it retains the interrogative force of an invitation. "Do you not yet understand?"[45]

Historical Foundation

History exists in a dialectical format, that is, there is a continuum of the past to the present to the future. It is through the lens of history that persons are afforded the

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[42] Williamson, 146.

[43] Geddert, " *Mark*", 187.

[44] Brooks, 130.

[45]Williamson, 146.

opportunities of engaging the past in its context of particularly in an effort to discern realities and the impact that this will have on future possibilities.

Individuals live in a time when people are conscious that history has molded our culture and our society. People are aware of the fact that today's decisions determine tomorrow's history. One's way of looking at history determines one's worldview. What one believes about God, about creation, and about humanity determines one's way of looking at history.

This historical foundation section will assist the reader in understanding the importance of Christian education and the role it plays in helping children gain a biblical foundation in the Word of God. It is designed to produce a greater awareness of the social response concerning the evolution of Christian education.[46] While not everything in the church is Christian education, Christian education touches on everything the local church does. In the words of the late Dr. Jonathan Jackson, professor of Christian education at Candler School of Theology, he said, "Christian education is that ministry that supports and undergirds all the other ministries in the church."[47]

In order to understand history, one must have a love and thirst for it, George Marsden notes in his book, *A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History*, says that love for neighbor requires a love for history:

> The basic reason why Christians should teach and learn history is so that we may better understand ourselves and our fellow men in relation to our own culture and to the world. Since the Christian's task is to live in this world and to

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[46] Lora-Ellen McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church: A Guide for Teaching Truth* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 18.

[47] Hill, 153.

> witness to the love of God as manifested in Christ, it is essential for us to understand ourselves and the world as best can.[48]

One cannot insist that all Christians must have exactly the same historical perspective. However, a Christian's way of looking at history, including biblical history, should take seriously the Bible's own perspective. In other words, our philosophy of history must be coherent with scriptural teaching concerning history.[49]

The way in which people become a part of a particular group, take on its identity, acquire its beliefs, habits, and its behaviors is nothing more than education. It calls attention to how people come to know who they are and what they believe through their interactions with those in the church. Christian education is not just the use of methods. Nor, is it limited to the Sunday morning Bible School. It is "the school of the church," giving careful consideration to all phases of the church's life and work. Even more, Christian education is "education for Christian living."[50]

Over the past half century Christian education has been diversely defined. Robert W. Pazmino in his book, *The Basic of Teaching for Christians: Preparation, Instruction, Evaluation,* defines Christian education as:

> The deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith. It fosters the change, renewal, and reformation of persons, groups, and structures by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform to the revealed will of God as expressed in the Old and

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[48] George M. Marsden and Frank Roberts, "*A Christian Perspective for the Teaching of History," in A Christian View of History*? (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 31-32.

[49] Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, The New American Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 55.

[50] Eleanor Daniel, John W. Wade, and Charles Gresham, *Introduction to Christian Education* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1970), 13.

> New Testament and preeminently in the person of Jesus Christ, as well as any outcome of that effort. [51]

Pazimo offers excellent definition of Christian education. The researcher agrees with Werner Graendorf, who speaks directly to the focus of Christian education, he defines it as:

> A Bible-based, Holy Spirit-empowered (Christ-centered) teaching-learning process. It seeks to guide individuals at all levels of growth through contemporary teaching means toward knowing and experiencing God's purpose and plan through Christ in every aspect of living. It also equips people for effective ministry, with the overall focus on Christ the master educator's example and His command to make mature disciples.

Graendorf's further describes and defines six distinctive which are embraced by empowering educational principles;

1. "Bible based" focuses upon the content of education
2. "Holy Spirit empowered" focuses upon the source of divine enabling for education
3. "Experiencing God's purpose and plan" focuses upon student's destiny and self-esteem;
4. "In every aspect of life" focuses upon biblical integration and application;
5. "Equips people for effective ministry" focuses upon training people for service; and
6. "Make mature disciples" focuses upon reproduction of Christ in a disciple making process. [52]

The ultimate goal of Christian education is that it teaches theology and helps Christians develop the skills to be strong disciples of an effective witness for Christ. To keep Christian education relevant to the African American church, Christian educators

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[51] Robert W. Pazmino, *Foundational Issues is Christian Education*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 87.

[52] Werner C. Graendolf, *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1981), 16.

must know their African-Christian history so that their congregations can be grounded in the true history of their faith.[53]

Martin Luther was the first educator in modern times to make the state aware of its great obligations to society and of its far reaching opportunities in the field of education. From the beginning of his career as a reformer, he placed great emphasis on the need for educating people for service to God, church, state and society. This was the main argument in his influential pamphlet on "*The Freedom of a Christian Man*," written during the critical year 1520. In his "Sermon on the Estate of Marriage," he had called attention to the duty of educating children to God's service. He said "Parents must know that they please God, Christendom, the entire world, themselves and their children in no better way than by educating their children." [54]

When we think of what the church today owes to Martin Luther and the other Reformers, we recognize that their single most important contribution was to lift up the Holy Scriptures and restore again the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. Yet, everything Luther did depend upon his understanding of God's truth.[55]

Despite the convictions of the Reformers about the Bible, the actual practice of educating the people did not materialize. In A. D. 1522-23, as Luther began to revisit the

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[53] McKinney, 3-4.

[54] Harold J. Grimm and Elmer L. Towns, *Martin Luther (1483-1546): A History of Religious Educators* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1975), 104.

[55] Gangel and Holman, 369.

churches that had come under his leadership what he discovered was not a reformed church but a church that was in even more need of reformation.[56]

After the Council of Trent (1545), when education became compulsory, catechetical religious instruction also found a place in day schools. Both forms of religious education were oriented to the doctrinal and ethical teaching set forth in the catechism. The instruction given in biblical history was functionally related to this teaching.[57]

By the second century in an effort to codify doctrine and practice for this newly defined people of God, the church wrote manuals like the *Didache*[58] and began writing catechisms and creating liturgy for the purpose of educating the church about their new way of life. The first six chapters of the *Didache* are called, "The Way of Life" or "Two Ways" meaning essentially that there is God's way that leads to life and man's way that leads to death. This section was essentially a Christianized version of Judaic teachings on moral living. It is very Hebraic in style, and its primary purpose was for catechetical instruction prior to baptism. [59]

As a development of the catechumenate, Christian education involved an attempt to develop a structured education for which the church would be responsible. The aim was to offer a full Christian education to children and young people and to introduce and

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[56] Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 64-65.

[57] E. Fahlbusch and G. W. Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity,* vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 591.

[58] Everett Ferguson, "Didache," *in Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York, NY: Garland, 1990), 262.

[59] Everett Ferguson, "Catechesis, Catechumenate" *In Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, (New York, NY: Garland, 1990), 185-186.

integrate them into full church membership (K. Hauschildt, 61). The total catechumenate formed a framework for the goal of total education at home and at school. [60]

In the sixteenth century Christian education lost its value in the church. Factors which contributed to the languishing of Christian education in the sixteenth century era; the clergy began to dominate more and more, while the responsibility and influence of individual laity diminished. The "institutional" church continued to exist and even to "Christianize", but Christian education suffered enormously.[61]

In 1635, the first public school was established in Boston, Massachusetts. Boston was in the forefront of educational "reform", when they enacted a law in 1642, which stated that any child not being properly educated, would have to be apprenticed to a trade. In 1646, Virginia followed with a similar law.[62]

However in 1780, in a little cottage in Gloucester, England, was launched one of the greatest movements in history. It was the beginning of the Sunday school, destined to be the world's greatest international and interdenominational factor for the study of the Bible.[63] There were stray children and youth causing considerable problems and Mr. Raikes refused to condemn them and their rowdy behavior. Instead he rented some space and gathered together some of those unkept, uncared for children to present them with the knowledge of God's religion and morals. Raikes proved to everyone that those children could learn reading, writing and some religion.

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[60] Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 443.

[61] Daniel, Wade and Gresham, 3.

[62] Charles B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1964), 231-232.

[63] Clarence H. Benson, *The Sunday School in Action* (Chicago, IL: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1932), 13.

While the Sunday school originated in Great Britain, it was to achieve its greatest growth and development in America. In 1785, two years after Great Britain had declared the thirteen original colonies a free and independent nation, the first Sunday school was started on this side of the Atlantic. William Elliott, in his own home, arranged to have the white boys and girls instructed in the Bible every Sabbath afternoon. The second Sunday school was established by Francis Asbury, 1786, in the home of Thomas Crenshaw, Hanover County, Virginia, and was expressly provided for the instruction of slaves. [64]

Sunday school has also been a major influence with the African American community. In earlier times, there was no formal education allowed for Blacks. Education was illegal. On Sunday morning blacks would gather for reading, writing and Bible study.

The opportunities to reach minorities in Sunday school in the U. S. have historically been great. Anne Boylan explains it this way:

> But it was among blacks, both adults and children that the schools found their most eager clients. Excluded from most sources of free schooling, blacks responded so quickly to the formation of Sunday school, that in New York, for example, they constituted 25% of the pupils in the Sunday school union society's of schools by 1917. In some cities, such as Utica, New York, it was the plight of free blacks that initially led whites to form the schools. Throughout the south, as well, reports from cities like Charleston, Nashville, and St. Louis frequently mentioned schools that include blacks, usually in separate classes and at different hours from whites. [65]

Friedrich Schleiermacher, "the father of modern theology," is perhaps the most influential Christian theologian of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The affects of his teaching continues even to the present. Of course, such high praise is not to discount

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[64] Benson, 16-17.

[65] Anne M. Boylan, *The Formation of an American Institution* (London: Yale Press, 1988), 23.

others such as Rudolph Bultmann or Karl Barth, but it simply recognizes that of all the high-profile theologians and authors in recent church history, no one has shaped the intellect and course of the Christian church quite like Schleiermacher. Early in his teaching career, he wrote that every person, clerical or lay, holding a position of church leadership is obligated to have an acquaintance with theology that is commensurate with the amount of leadership responsibility he or she holds.[66]

The religious instruction among Black people began in the pre-Emancipation eras in the history of the Black church. During the period from Emancipation to World War II, the Black church grew into a national and racially separate religious institution. [67]

According to Thomas H. Hill, African American churches have always been educational institutions. The church educated enslaved Africans and engaged in both public and denominational educational projects.[68]

In 1933, noted African American historian and educator, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, commenting on the deplorable state of education for "the negro race" in America, said that it promoted the myth of "negro" inferiority and white superiority. He went on to say:

> When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told, In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary. [69]

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[66] F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, trans. Terrence N. Tice (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960), 20.

[67] Hill, 25.

[68] Ibid., 12.

[69] Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, Inc., 1990), xiii.

Education for African Americans is a crucial factor in their struggle for empowerment, liberation, and justice. The researcher concurs with the insightful point made by Carl Ellis, where he argues:

> True liberation is not the right to do what one wants, it is the power to do what is right. If we are going to achieve liberation of our historical quest, then we must go beyond liberation to righteousness, God's righteousness. [70]

The Encyclopedia of Christianity explains the historical roots of black theology, by stating that it goes back to the beginning of African slavery in the United States. The founding of the independent African American Baptist and Methodist churches came about in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The central theological claim of black theology is that the God of the exodus, of the prophets, and of Jesus can be known only in the struggles of the poor for liberation.[71] In the United States a Black Theology of Liberation emerged that reflected upon the brutal, historical reality of slavery and oppression for black people. This theology articulated what was occurring politically in the civil rights movement of the mid-1960s.[72]

Liberation theology proceeds from the understanding that salvation as defined by the terms of deliverance from oppression is the beginning and not the culmination of the discourse regarding the aspects of freedom among humankind. The theologians who practice and profound the liberation motif have developed an analysis of theology that

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[70] Carl F. Lewis, *Beyond Liberation* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1983), 175.

[71] Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 275.

[72] James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1969).

emphasizes the notion that salvation must be expansive enough to include deliverance and emancipation. [73]

In 1960, the idea of "black theology" emerged when a small group of radical black clergy began to reinterpret the meaning of the Christian faith from the standpoint of the black struggle for liberation in the United States. Black theology is a theology of liberation because it is a theology which arises from identification with the oppressed blacks of America, seeking to interpret the gospel of Jesus in the light of the black condition. It believes that the liberation of the black community is God's liberation.[74]

Why is Black Theology important to African Americans? In the words of C. Eric Lincoln, it is important because:

> Black Theology focuses on black history as a source for its theological interpretation of God's Word in the world, because divine activity is inseparable from the history of black people. There can be no comprehension of black theology without realizing that its existence comes from a community which looks back on its unique past, visualizes the reality of the future, and then makes decisions about possibilities in the present.

Lincoln further states that:

> Taking seriously the reality of God's involvement in history, black theology asks, "What are the implications of black history for the revelation of God?" While the answer to this question is not easy, black theology refuses to accept a God who is not identified totally with the goals of the black community. Black theology must take seriously the cultural expression of the community it represents so that it will be able to speak relevantly to the black condition. [75]

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[73] Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 38.

[74] Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 5.

[75] C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience in Religion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974), 114.

It was during the 1960s and 1970s, the black church, challenged religious education to consolidate its mission with the Black community in order to liberate the oppressed and empower them. It would be safe to state that liberation theology desires to bring about wholeness and justice for all persons, as well as the coming into full humanity for all who have been oppressed and subjugated.[76] According to the theologians who adhere to the practice of liberation, the ministry of salvation involves a historical interaction between God and oppressed people.

In 1974, Eric Rosenboom argued that the local congregation is properly the subject of education rather than the church as a whole. It is here that the church takes concrete shape. The congregation is a place of learning with opportunities for growth and development. The task of Christian education is to combine differentiation with integration in a total concept of congregational education. The congregation itself is both the subject and object of its own life and learning. [77]

By the beginning of the twentieth century a Sunday school system was operational in at least the large urban church settings. The Sunday school served as a means of integrating new converts into the life of the church. Its goal was to provide religious instructions in the biblical and doctrinal content of the Christian faith.[78]

Ann Boylan, noted author of, *The Formation of an American Institution*, wrote how she perceived Sunday school. She stated, I have written about Sunday Schools

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[76]Thomas and Wondra, 38.

[77] Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 443-444.

[78] Hill, 19.

because they seem to be an important but neglected piece of American history. She further states that:

> Like the common school, the Sunday school taught more than the lesson plans revealed along with the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Students absorbed the values and precepts of evangelical Protestantism. More important, they imbibed their teacher's expectations and learned the behavioral manifestations of religious conversion. The story of the Sunday school concerns changing concepts of childhood and adolescence (and child and adolescent behavior) as much as prayer and deity, the power of denominational publishers and their competitors as much as catechism and lesson books. It is the story of an American institution. [79]

G. C. Newton, summarizes what the researcher believe explains the beauty of education in his book *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity*, he states:

> The beauty of life and education is that opportunities for lifelong learning still abound for us today. Whether through formal or non-formal means, the believer needs to continue to take advantage of every opportunity to learn, grow, and develop. By developing an individual learning plan, each person will be more apt to take learning seriously as people diligently strive to walk more closely with Christ and learn from Him and His Word. [80]

He further suggests that:

> They must utilize informal teaching in order for more participation and interaction which ultimately leads to opportunity for application. It is taking advantage of the teachable moments that arise in everyday life. In a Christian context that implies looking for opportunities to engage the learner in reflecting, questioning, and discussing issues and help the student discover or reinforce biblical principles. [81]

Paulo Freire, 20th century's most outstanding teacher explains how he feels about the way teachers are teaching. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he attacked conventional education for its 'banking' approach. He argues:

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[79] Boylan, 4.

[80] Newton, 113.

[81] Newton, 84-85.

> The teacher knows and the student learns. Information is put by the teacher into the head of the student, so the teacher talks and the student listens. Basically, the teacher is the active and the student is the passive part of the process. The teacher has authority and the student must submit. Freire was not suggesting that students 'do their own thing', but that teachers and students become transformed together in the process of transforming the world. He went on to say, it is a spiritual freedom that comes as a result of being empowered and that leads to transformation. [82]

In the words of Plato, he states that "Knowledge originates from the inside of a man's mind." Those who are swept with this idea leave their students with the concept that you need no one to teach you. In contradiction to this theory, Aristotle argued that knowledge is acquired from outside. Although both theories present some iota of truth, Norman DeJong emphasizes that "such a perspective is a shallow kind of endeavor with no room allowed for discernment between truth and falsehood, no room for character development and spiritual nourishment. People who propagate that knowledge acquired only from outside hinders their students from being committed in searching to know the truth. This will limit their God given gifts. The truth lies somewhere in between the two views."[83]

Thomas Hill in his book, Religious Education in the African American Tradition points out that:

> The Black experience is a religious experience in which the forefathers and foremothers reinterpreted the Christian faith in the light of their suffering. They did not just read the Bible. They brought to the text their total experience-pain and pleasures, hopes and despairs, agonies and ecstasies, and the belief that a better day was coming. They expressed their experience of God in song, story, and prayer. [84]

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[82] Freire, 57-58.

[83] DeJong, 54-55.

[84] Hill, 37.

He went on further to say that:

> To be Black and Christian in the twenty-first century represents African Americans' defining, defending, and developing their own understandings of identity, which place the African person at the center of analysis. [85]

The researcher believes that Werner C. Graendolf, gives a great summary to the purpose and plan of gaining a Christian education foundation. He notes, "The educational process that each of us comes through in life shapes what we believe, what we value, and what we are able to accomplish. Where that process is haphazard, weak, or aborted, it is usually reflected in the quality of life. Certainly, education in itself is no guarantee of effectiveness or success. But the Spirit-empowered understanding and outliving of Bible-based teaching is considerable assurance. That is our challenge as parents, pastors, and educators. [86]

Theological Foundation

Theology certainly has a place in the content of teaching in the Church. Theology is derived from the Greek words *logos* of *theos*, meaning reasoning about God. "God" implies creation, providence and redemption. Thinking about God includes God's action in creation and history. In the words of John MacQuarrie, he states: Theology may begin with the divine existence, or it may begin with human existence. Either way it has to do with God.[87]

In order to fully comprehend the theological significance of teaching utilizing tools, resources and methods and teaching children, the researcher believes questions

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[85] Hill, 25.

[86] Graendolf, 11.

[87] John MacQuarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 51.

surrounding teaching must be addressed by Christian theologians. She also believes it is best demonstrated through the use of Practical Theology which help shape this projects ministry model.

Historically, Practical Theology has been viewed as the area of theology that focuses on certain core practices of ministry. It fosters teaching and learning about the lived practices of faithful disciples and how ministry relates to these practices. It is a comprehensive discipline of teaching, learning, research, and writing focused on its own scholarly enterprise.[88]

Practical Theology is a critical and constructive reflection within a living community about human experience and interaction. The task is not to discover the clear and distinct ideas of truth to which communities must conform. Rather the task is to discover more adequate ways of articulating the depth, richness, and possibilities of life as they are found in concrete communities.[89]

According to authors James N. Polling and Donald E. Miller they define a "Christian community as a process of interaction among believers who seek to be faithful to Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture and its tradition. Without theological interpretation, the Christian community loses its validity and vision. Without community, theology loses its locus and power."[90]

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[88] Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, *Practical Theology, Theological Education and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 77.

[89] James N. Polling and Donald E. Miller, *Foundation for a Practical Theology of Ministry*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 62-64.

[90] Polling and Miller, 13-15.

Christians are gathered together in the church as the congregation of the faithful for the common purpose of unity, learning the Word of God and applying the principles to their life. G. Michael Cocoris in his book *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach* states:

> Koinonia is a Greek word which means fellowship. This fellowship is usually received as that which is shared among the congregation of the faithful. It denotes oneness, caring, sharing and support of fellowship. The term Koinonia was Paul's favorite word to describe the believer's relationship with the risen Lord. Koinonia with the Lord results not only in sharing his benefits, but also sharing his suffering. Koinonia was a most appropriate term to describe the unity and bonding that exists between Christians by virtue of the fact that they share together in the grace of the Gospel.[91]

James H. Harris makes an incredible point in his book *Preaching Liberation* that most congregants are not interested in arguments about the existence of God or the nature of God; they already know who God is and that God is good. However, he states, they are interested in how God will help them in their particular struggles in situations.[92]

> To answer the many unanswered questions, Eugene Peterson clearly states that: The reading style employed more often than not by contemporary Christians is fast, reductive, information-gathering and, above all, practical. We read for what we can get out of it, what we can put to use, what we think we can use– and right now. "We . . . we . . . we . . . we . . ." all the way home.
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> If we are serious about following Jesus and living out the gift of his life in detail in our bodies and circumstances, we must swim against this whitewater river and familiarize ourselves with the world in which Jesus and his gift of life are revealed to us. We do it by reading our Scriptures slowly, imaginatively, prayerfully, and obediently. Each adverb is important. [93]

On the other hand, if theology is to be relevant to the human condition which created it, it must relate itself to the questions which arise out of the community responsible for its reason for being. Black people have heard enough about God. What

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[91] G. Michael Cocori, *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1984), 170.

[92] James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 16.

[93] Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVaristy Press, 2000), 204.

they want to know is what God has to say about the black condition.[94] James Cones point out the struggles of black people in his book *Speaking the Truth*. He notes, "Instead of asking whether the Bible is infallible, black people want to know whether it is real, that is, whether the God to which it bears witness is present in their struggle.[95]

Can God speak to children in their particular struggles and situations? Noted Author Lawrence Richards answers the questions plain and simple, he states:

> Children have experiences in which they need God. Children have fears that can be quieted by coming to trust God. Children do wrong and need to find strength to do what they know is right. God is eager to become real to each child, now, in his present life experiences. How foolish then, and how tragic when children's Bible teaching concentrate on things far removed from the child's now, as do so such lessons as the quarterly temperance unit in some curricula. [96]

The question that needs to be addressed is; Did Jesus value teaching in his ministry to children? Jesus was the most effective teacher. Paul D. Hanson in his book *The People Called* emphasizes the fact that Jesus' giftedness as a teacher was evident to friends and foes alike.[97] Jesus knew that teaching was necessary in order to bring about the essence of spiritual transformation.

The word for transformation, *metamorphoûsthe*, is the word from which the English word metamorphosis is derived. The word is typically used in reference to physical change. Used in religious literature to sometimes refer to changes that cannot be perceived by the natural eye

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[94] Lincoln, 124.

[95] Cone, *Speaking the Truth,* 11.

[96] Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 182-183.

[97] Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 2001), 398.

Does scripture support the notion that teaching is transformational and restorative to those who are oppressed by challenges of life and society? One of the main aspects of Jesus ministry was teaching. Jesus used teaching as a tool of empowerment to help people live a godly, productive life. Teaching shows Jesus' concern for understanding.

Jesus goal was to take people from where they were to where they ought to be. A remarkable freedom appears in His methodological skills and with a clear-cut objective. Jesus did not entertain the crowds but while teaching He was an educator who was committed to changing lives.

Jesus met people where they were with their questions, needs, hurts and concerns. He knew how to listen to people and key off their comments. He could adapt to the issue of the moment; He could engage with them without stripping them.

Donald S. Whitney discusses in his book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life,* the fact that Jesus often asked questions about people's understanding of the Scriptures, beginning with the words,

> 'Have you not read . . . ?' He assumed that those claiming to be the people of God would have read the Word of God. A case can be made that this question implies a familiarity with the *entire* Word of God." He further stated, Jesus had a thorough working knowledge of the Scriptures and that he understood the Scriptures both as authoritative for the people of God and for the justification of his own actions. Whitney goes on to note that there is no greater factor in the shaping of a person's moral and social behavior than regular Bible reading.[98]

From the role of Jesus, teaching in the church is crucial and if the stories and truths of redemption history are not taught to the children, then there is a possibility that Christian education in the church will die. Children are essential to the life of the church,

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[98] Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 28.

yesterday, today and tomorrow. Throughout the scripture (Deut. 4:9; 6:4-9; 11:19; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4) the survival of the faith community is dependent on each new generation of children. It becomes the responsibility of family and community to pass on the story of God's creating, redeeming, and sustaining grace and power to their children.[99]

Here is where the researcher believes it is vital to have trained teachers in the classroom to help bring about clarity of God's Word. According to H. Edward Everding, in his book *A Hermeneutical Approach to Educational Theory*, he writes:

> Teachers regularly and dramatically confront the hermeneutical problem every time they teach the Bible. Each student, as well as the teacher, has his or her own understanding of a text. This often results in multiple and sometime conflicting interpretations. This phenomenon frequently leaves the teacher with many unanswered questions such as: how do I account for these different interpretations? Are they all correct, or is there one normative meaning of the text? What then should be my goal in teaching the Bible? What can I do to achieve the goals?[100]

Since God's point of communication with us all is the Word, it's clear that the Bible must be for children too. It's through the Bible that children come to know the person of God, to understand His love and steadfastness, to discern His character and care, and to know His will that they might be guided in their responses to Him in daily life. Through the Bible children too can become aware of the God who reveals Himself there.[101]

Practical teaching is an effective tool for teaching children. It is intended to make it useful and applicable, in order that it is relevant to everyday concerns. In addition to it

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[99] May, Posterski, Stonehouse and Cannell, 88.

[100] Edward H. Everding, *A Hermeneutical Approach to Education Theory: Christian Education in an Era of Change.* Edited by Marvin Taylor (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 41.

[101] Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 181.

being relevant, it must also be creative in its presentation. Lawrence Richards gives a significant definition of being creative and the importance of its use in his book *Creative Bible Teaching*. He states:

> Creative is an exciting word. When we us it, most of us think wistfully of someone else, someone with that gift of freshness and spontaneity we wish we had. Often the laymen and lay women who teach the Bible feel like this. They wish they could teach creatively, but are sure it is not possible for them. Fortunately, it is possible.
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> According to *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, creative means "originative, inventive, and productive." All of this is true of creative Bible teaching. A creative teacher makes his classes fresh, vital and interesting. And his class is productive. His teaching bears fruit. This kind of creativity is not something the church can afford to leave to the exceptional teacher. It's the heart of the ministry it expects from every teacher. [102]

John Gardner clearly understands the importance of teaching, since he addresses the growing concern of teaching in his book, *No Easy Victories*, he states that teaching is desperately lacking today:

> Much education today is monumentally ineffective. All too often we are giving our people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants. We are stuffing their heads with the products of earlier innovations rather than teaching them how to innovate. We think of the mind as a storehouse to be filled rather than as an instrument to be used."[103]

Effective teaching is lacking today and so is the need for teachers who are exciting, interesting and creative. Before one begins to teach they must first understand that the teaching ministry is God-ordained. It is neither self-appointed nor chosen by man. Ephesians 4:11 says that Christ himself gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists,

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[102] Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 67.

[103] John W. Gardner, *No Easy Victories* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1968), 68.

pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Unfortunately, today many teachers who are teaching children are failing in two principle ways: (i) What they are teaching, (ii) How they are teaching it. [104] The best teachers love those they instruct and model what they teach. In Ephesians 4:15, Paul states, they are enthusiastic, hard-working and systematic in their preparation, and always assume their students will teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). Henri Nouwen claims in his book *Creative Ministry* that:

> The teaching becomes ministry when teachers move beyond the transference of knowledge and are willing to offer their own life experience to their students so that paralyzing anxiety can be removed, new liberating insights can come about, and real learning can take place.[105]

In Christian education, teachers must understand that children do not all learn in the same manner. Some of the ways that children are involved in learning have been pointed out where Dr. Howard Gardner, an authority on the multiple intelligences, researched and wrote in his book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983) he states even that Jesus used various methods when he taught.

> Verbal/Linguistic - language and words, both written and spoken. Jesus approached his listeners in this manner with his teachings and stories. (Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

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[104] D. G. Hart and R. Albert Mogler, *Theological Education in Evangelical Tradition* (Baker Books, 1996), ix.

[105] Henri Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (New York, NY: Image Books, 1991) 116.

Logical/Mathematical - inductive thinking and reasoning, statistics, and abstract patterns. Jesus used questions and answers to reach his listeners who learned this way. (Luke 7:36-50)

Visual/Spatial - visualizing objects and creating internal mental pictures. Jesus used common objects to explain his meanings to persons who learn in this manner. (Luke 6:47-49; Matthew 13:1-9)

Body/Kinesthetic - related to the physical, such as movement and physical activity. Jesus involved disciples in learning by fishing and washing their feet. (John 13:1-17)

Interpersonal - relationships between persons, including true communication. Jesus worked with persons one-on-one on a personal level and also developed small group settings, his most successful being the twelve disciples. (John 4:1-30; Mark 6:7-13)[106]

Realizing that students learn at various levels, we can now define creative teaching as consciously and effectively focusing on activities that raise the students' learning level. What distinguishes creative Bible teaching from non-creative teaching is spelled out in three areas of contrast.

1. Focus on facts v. focus on meaning. When teaching has this focus, the students develop only the ability to repeat or recognize the Bible truths. The creative teacher knows and uses a variety of methods. He knows how to cover content quickly and clearly. He knows how to stimulate his students to test and relate truth. The creative teacher finds time for a thorough exploration of the meaning of the truth taught. And learning in the class moves on up to the higher level, where appropriate response to God's Word can be seen and made.
2. Student's passivity v. student activity. Students must be led beyond listening. They must personally think through the meaning of Bible truths. They must toss the ideas around in their own minds to formulate and express them in their own words. The creative teacher makes sure that his students take an active part in exploring meaning. For meaning to the student, he needs to discover for himself the relationship of a truth to his life.

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[106] Delia Halverson, *Ready, Set, Teach! Training and Supporting Volunteers in Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 95-96.

3. Teacher as teller v. teacher as guide. When the focus of the lesson is on facts which the students can learn without participating, the teacher serves as a teller. Sometimes noncreative teachers use methods. Methods of a non-creative teacher have two characteristics: they are designed to communicate content, and they are primarily teacher activities. The creative teacher has a different concept of his role. His responsibility is to stimulate his students to discover meaning and to see the response God requires of them personally to His voice. The creative teacher serves as a guide to learning, and strives constantly to structure situations which will stimulate his students to discover meaning. The methods he uses are set apart by two characteristics: they are chosen to focus attention on meaning, and they create students involvement in this process of discovery.[107]

Creative Bible teaching is teaching the Bible in ways that cause learning on the significant levels of restatement, relation and realization. To cause this kind of learning the Bible teacher must (1) focus on the meaning of the Bible truth taught, (2) involve his students in active search for meaning, and (3) stimulate and guide his students in this discovery process.[108]

Compared with the scribes and Pharisees of his day, Jesus' teaching ministry was unique in many ways.

> First, Jesus taught as one with authority. When he taught scripture, he gave his own interpretation, not one memorized from the Mishnah or presented on the authority of tradition (Mark 1:22). Second, he taught many people on whom the teachers of his day would not have wasted their time, women, Gentiles, and "sinners." He welcomed children and did not send them away. Third, he taught wherever he went, in the synagogue, in homes, by the sea, on hillsides, wherever the people were. Fourth, he used a wide variety of teaching methods. Object Lessons, parables, dialogue, and he helped people remember what he taught while hiding the truth from those who did not want to understand and respond to it. Finally, Jesus perfectly lived out what he taught, thus providing a model for understanding what it means to love God and our neighbor in our everyday lives.

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[107] Richards. *Creative Bible Teaching*, 73-76.

[108] Ibid., 73-76.

> Jesus' ministry of teaching helped prepare his followers to understand the meaning of his life, death and resurrection (Matt. 28:18-20). [109]

Cone says it is the responsibility of the church to continue the message and work of Christ to all people. The researcher agrees with James H. Cone in his book *A Black Theology of Liberation,* where he states Black theology is biblical theology. He even elaborates on this point by stating the following:

> It is theology which takes seriously the importance of Scripture in theological discourse. There can be no theology of the Christian gospel which does not take into account the biblical witness. It is true that the Bible is not the revelation of God; only Jesus is. But it is an indispensable witness to God's revelation and is not used as a primary source for Christian thinking about God. [110]

The researcher further agrees with Cone when he further states that black theology is affirmed as a twentieth-century analysis of God's Word in the world. Cone notes the following:

> It is indeed the biblical witness that says that God is a God of liberation, who speaks to the oppressed and abused, and assures them that divine righteousness will vindicate their suffering. It is the Bible that tells us that God became human in Jesus Christ so that the kingdom of God would make freedom for all human beings.[111]

Christian education and the church are the vehicles through which God works in the world. It is the reshaping of personalities into the image of Jesus Christ that Christian education must be directed. The teacher's lessons must become a powerful tool for transformation and restoration when one learns about the hurt, pain and challenges that children experience on a daily basis.

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[109] Michael J. Anthony, *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001), 18.

[110] Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 31.

[111] Ibid., 31.

Andrew Sung Park speaks of the importance of knowing the audience and understanding the challenges that individuals face in their daily lives. He offers an excellent discussion in his book *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* where he talks about the need for the church to face issues that cause pain and challenges in individuals' lives.

> He examines whether the Bible is concerned about the sinned-against and their salvation. Naming a problem, he says, is the beginning of its solution, and hence the way to begin is by specifying the pain of those who have been sinned against. Park reminds us that although there is no general terms to describe the wound of victims in Western languages, Korean has a term to describe the deep wound of victims: *han*. Park asserts:
>
> The Bible is for sinners and to sinned-against. However, the Bible, particularly the New Testament, was primarily written for the community of faith that was persecuted and sinned-against. If you want to have a more holistic interpretation, it is critical to read the Bible from that perspective. [112]

Instead of blaming teachers for their shortcomings, churches need to begin training teachers, equipping them for ministry to which they have been called. This training is essential to Christian education effectiveness.

According to Howard Hendricks, in his book *Teaching to Change Lives*, he states it appears that due to the shortage of teachers:

> One may be forced to make a choice to fill the empty spaces. Some have settled for a shallow teacher who teaches with enthusiasm and zest, over another who may be scholarly but boring! As an effective teacher, one must not only know that which they would teach, but they must also know those whom they wish to teach. Teachers should not only be interested in principles, their goal is to infect people for the work of the kingdom. [113]

Is it not possible to form a biblical faith without serious acquaintance with the Bible itself? It is absolutely crucial not only for our children, but for the integrity of the

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[112] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 33.

[113] Howard G. Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 55.

church, that we form religious commitments out of deep acquaintance with the biblical story, both the part of it we affirm, and the parts with which we quarrel or struggle.[114]

The Bible is the most valuable tool that helps people confronts their challenges of life. Having an encounter with Christ eventually brings about healing and restoration. The researcher agrees with Tyrone Inbody where he reminds us that the church was established as God's instrument of reconciliation. In his book *The Faith of the Christian Church*, he writes that the church does not 'have a mission' but rather 'is a mission'. If this is true then the church must work to help restore the relationship between God and the sinner. The church then is sent into the world as God's reconciling community. [115] He further states that God sees human beings as redeemable and goes to great extremes to provide us with the tools we need from His Word to be restored to a right relationship with him and a more productive life.[116]

> Eugene Roekhlkepartain's book entitled, *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage*, he states "that there appears to be a widespread assumption that Christian education is about new knowledge and children. And until a person understands Christian education as "discovering what is meant to be Christian in this time and place, "it is unlikely that Christian education will be central to the life of the church."[117]

Watchman Nee in his book *The Release of the Spirit* emphasizes the point that in our day God commits himself to the church. He goes on further to note that:

> God's power and his work are in the church, Just as in the Gospels we find all God's work given to the Son, so today God has entrusted all His works to the

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[114] Byars, 195.

[115] Tyrone Inbody, *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman Publishing Company, 2005), 263.

[116] Inbody, 186.

[117] Roekhlkepartain, 191.

> church and will not act apart from it,. From the day of Pentecost up to the present, God's work has been carried out through the church. Think of the church's tremendous responsibility. God's committal to the church is like his committal previously to one Man, Christ-without reservation or restriction. [118]

The researcher agrees with Dr. Alvin Lewis in his book, *Strategies for Educating African American Adult,* even though, it was as written to an adult audience he makes a valid point about engaging in creative Christian education. The author states:

> To engage in. . . creative Christian education requires rethinking the way we teach and what we teach. We may need to review, reinvent, and rewrite the curriculum materials handed down to us. New approaches and methods may require teachers to seek training on how to teach.

Lewis goes on to further describe learning as drama which is best experienced when both the teacher and the learner can come away from the session with positive feelings, knowing that discovery and enlightenment have taken place."[119]

Christian education, then, raises the question of coordinating variously qualified workers or accredited teachers. K. E. Nipkow took a further step when he argued that:

> Congregational education cannot be initiated and organized from above without the assent and cooperation of the members. This view assumed that education is not a one-sided influencing of children and young people by adults (Childhood; Youth), for it is the relations set up by adults that constitute "the real problem of education" (Nipkow 1990, 31–32). Instead, education should be viewed as a basic relation between generations and can be achieved only by mutual learning. [120]

Donald Guthrie, wrote a helpful chapter entitled 'Jesus," in Elmer L. Towns book entitled, *A History of Religious Educators*, by spelling out the relationship between teacher and teaching:

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[118] Watchman Nee, *The Release of the Spirit* (Cloverdale, IN: Sure Foundation Pub, Inc., 1965), 50.

[119] Lewis, 17.

[120] Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 443.

> Christianity has historically stressed religious teaching since Jesus Himself was the supreme exponent of the art. His influence on education in the church cannot be overstressed, yet caution is needed in one respect: Jesus was more than an educator. Although He may be regarded as an Illuminator of the mind, His Mission was more basic. He came to bring redemption, and that redemption was the key to His teaching. Even if He had not come as Redeemer, His teaching, in both its content and its method, would be unique. The real claim to preeminence, however, rests in the fact that the practicability and relevance of His teaching depends on His work of atonement."[121]

G. C. Newton explains best Jesus model for teaching, in his book *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity.* He states that for the teacher to teach and students to learn, each must be properly connected to the Vine, Jesus Christ. A teacher must model such a connection to motivate others to follow. He further states:

> The teacher must challenge and train students in how to develop their own relationship with Christ. For the Christian, teaching is a unique privilege that may take different forms: formal, informal, non-formal, and modeling. The focus of Christian teaching should be changed lives. It takes all types of teachers to be instrumental in helping the variety of people in the body of Christ to grow. Jesus is one of the best examples of a teacher in all of history. Christ taught in a variety of situations: one-on-one teaching (personal interaction, John 4:1-42); small group learning (the disciples alone with Christ, Luke 22:14-38); large groups of people (The multitude hears Him, Matthew 23:1-39). When we follow Christ, our example as the Teacher, we will not only challenge our students to be like Christ but also show them warmth and grace when they fall short.[122]

Noted author, George Barna sums it up best when he states, "unless we embrace a comprehensive and far-reaching commitment to radical change in how we conduct our lives and our ministries, we are doomed to minimal results. If we hope to make a

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[121] Elmer L. Towns, *A History of Religious Educators* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 15.

[122] Newton, 86-88.

significant difference in the lives of individuals and in the nation's culture, then we must improve our intentionality, our intensity, and our strategies.[123]

Clear instructions are given in the Scriptures as to one's attitude and responsibility toward children. It states, "Despise not one of these little ones" (Matthew 18:10); "Forbid them not to come unto Me" (Mark 10:14); "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). Christ last command before His ascension was, "Go. . . teach all nations." If you have no students than whom are you going to teach? If you have no teacher than whom can the student learn from?

Scripture is also clear as it relates to the responsibility of teachers. It states, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness…." (James 3:1).

Teachers must take seriously the mandate of Matthew 28:18-20 and not take for granted that people will learn automatically to live the Christian life. We must teach them how to be Jesus' disciples. Otherwise in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."[124] If the church does not disciple people in the way of Christ then the end result will be that they will not know Christ or emulate Him. To add to that statement, Dallas Willard says essentially that, discipleship is not an add-on option. The New Testament was written by disciples, about disciples, and to disciples, about how to be a disciple, and how to make more disciples.[125]

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[123] George Barna, *Growing True Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 9.

[124] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 59.

[125] Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*: *Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991), 258.

Willard also writes, that discipleship is like an apprenticeship by which a person becomes like Jesus, in the work that Jesus was doing, and teaching others to do what Jesus did.[126]

Teaching is not just an extra job we have taken on or an additional time commitment we have made. It is a way of expressing our commitment and loyalty to the One who created us, redeemed us, and now calls us. We need to see our service as teachers in the church not as a duty we engage out of guild or as a burden we must bear but as truly a call from God.[127][128]

Griggs sums up the researcher theological model by stating that we must "Change from a doing my duty to "this is my ministry".[129] That statement resonated with the researcher because nothing is more unsatisfying than working alongside with teachers who are teaching just because they feel it is their duty; as a result, it comes across in their teaching. It is important for teachers to understand that every day they have an opportunity to teach by the way they act in the presence of the children.

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[126] Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, 288.

[127] Tye, *Your Calling as a Teacher*, 10.

[129] Donald Griggs, *Teaching Today's Teachers to Teach* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 27.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher offers a critical discussion of the methodology and project design employed in formulating the ministry model based on the discipline and principles of Christian education. Just as people learn in many different ways, teachers teach in various ways. The researcher purpose is not to indicate that there is one right way to teach, instead, the goal is to engage in some reflection regarding the activity of teaching creatively utilizing biblical methodologies.

It is imperative that children be exposed to sound and accurate presentations of the word in order to bring transformation to their own situations. The researcher demonstrates a number of tools and appropriate methodologies that can be used to help children have a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures through the ministry model.

Changes in our lifestyles and technology have brought about numerous changes in the technique of teaching today. Consequently, we must train our teachers to meet those changes.[1] It is because of the importance of teaching that the researcher has chosen to present a training model that *Equips Teachers Utilizing Biblical Methodologies to Increase Instructional Creativity*. With great expectations the researcher hopes that this model will provide both insight and be of assistance to all who work in the area of Christian education and especially those working with children in the church.

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[1] Halverson, 9.

The strategy behind this model is to present to some, and re-introduce to others within the context of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Ministry the importance of creatively teaching children by utilizing additional resources, tools and methodologies. These additional methods will allow students to become more engaged in the lesson in order to be able to disciple others.

Donald Polkinghorne stated, that "Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. They use interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of why they see, hear and understand."[2] He further states that researchers use this method to gather data that serve as evidence for their distilled descriptions and that the data is usually transformed into written text for analytic use.[3]

The researcher carefully chose the Research Design as Worldviews, Strategies, and Methods as outlined in John Creswell's *Research and Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods approach* since this view provides an understanding of a research problem. [4] Mt. Ennon has several teachers who have come forth to work in the Children's Ministry; however, the problem is the majority of the teachers are failing to fully engage the children due to their inadequate training, insufficient planning and lack of tools, resources and methods. The researcher is seeking to establish a greater

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[2] Donald E. Polkinghorne, "Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2005, 137-145.

[3] Ibid., 137-145.

[4] John E Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches,* 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing, 2009), 15-18.

understanding of why teachers lack utilizing different resources, tools and methods to increase creativity in teaching the Word of God.

Barbara Peacock makes a valid point in her book entitled: *Called to Teach: Commissioned as Leaders, Learners, Educators, and Disciples*, where she informs us, that "in order for the Kingdom of God to be advanced, it is imperative to prepare effective teachers."[5] The researcher would also add that effective teachers produce higher student achievement and are more likely to remain in teaching once they understand how children learn and how to make material accessible to a wide range of students.

The researcher and an implementation team created and conducted a study to include a combination of bible seminars, training in the use of effective tools, resources and methodologies along with specific activities based on Jesus' teachings to his disciples. Jesus used extraordinary methods that were both simple and profound to capture the audience attention. His method of teaching explains the significance of being creative and utilizing different tools and methods. According to the Gospels, Jesus demonstrated His mastery of various methodologies in a series of illustrations, figures, paradoxes, and parables, which made Him the model of an effective teacher.[6]

In order to establish the validity of the data collected, the researcher used the method of triangulation from multiple sources. The sources included data gathered through evaluations, observation, focus groups, interviewing, and questionnaires. In

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[5] Barbara Peacock, *Called to Teach: Commissioned as Leaders, Learners, Educators, and Disciples* (Charlotte, NC: Urban Ministries, Inc., 2012), 9.

[6] Peacock, 13-14.

addition, training workshops based on biblical passages were taught, executed and examined. All which contributed to the qualitative approach for the ministry model.

These tools were significant in order to collect the required data that would serve the objective of identifying the issues that have an impact on the children ministry. The sources assisted the researcher in building a coherent justification of themes. According to Cresswell, themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study.[7]

In order for the researcher's project to be examined, an outline was developed centering on a problem, hypothesis and research design. The tools of measurement were employed to test the hypothesis and a project time line detailed the schedule for the implementation of the methodology.

The foundation for this project revolves around the fact that if teachers are trained on how to formulate creative lesson using additional tools, resources and methods that have an aim at glorifying God and edifying the people of God, then the children will be more enthusiastic about participating in the lessons which are designed to bring about transformation.

The research for the theory of the response to the proposed hypothesis employed a qualitative approach and analysis. The non-traditional qualitative approach maintains an insistence on posing the question of, "How do I (we) improve my (our) work?[8] Rather

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[7] Cresswell, 190-191.

[8] Jean McNiff, Pamela Lomax and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project* (New York, NY: Routledge-Farmer, 2003), 10.

than from the traditional posture of, "What is happening?" The qualitative approach operates in an almost polar manner from the quantitative. By making use of the qualitative mode this allowed the researcher an opportunity to interact and become involved in the study.

According to John Creswell, the interaction on the part of the researcher may take the form of living with or observing the participants over a protracted period of time or actual collaboration with the participants.[9] The researcher was dynamically and intimately involved with the overall project as well as with the participants. This hands-on-approach was vital because if one is called into ministry, the call requires one to embrace and touch the people of God in the most intimate areas of their lives.

The hypothesis for this project was developed after carefully listening to children indicate that their teachers were boring, the lessons were over their heads and the teacher does not allow them to ask questions related to the lesson. As a result, this ministry model was developed through a series of observations of teachers concerning the context and their ability to adapt and apply accessible tools, resources and different methodologies into their lessons. The researcher hypothesizes that this ministry model will offer a guide for teachers that is necessary to teach, attract and retain children's involvement. The anticipated outcome of this project includes: the development of a resourceful model of Christian education which consists of resources, tools and methodologies.

The context group consisted of ten volunteers from Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children Ministry who ranged in ages from eighteen to seventy who are currently working in the Children's ministry. Every context associate signed a letter of invitation as

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[9] Creswell, 35.

well as a commitment form to participate in the various workshops and observation of their response to utilizing additional tools, resources and methodologies to increase instructional creativity.

In an effort to identify with the minds of each participant, the researcher used a seven-week Christian education model with emphasis on biblical truths. The training sessions provided the researcher with an opportunity to address the teachers from a biblical perspective. The training incorporated a lecture period; question and answer; open discussion phase; followed by a questionnaire assessment administered at the end. The training sessions were designed to purposely provide the teachers with new tools, resources and methodologies for teaching. It also gave them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with and implement them during the training sessions.

The design of the research project involved three (3) phases of implementation that occurred over seven weeks. The seven-week implementation stage was preceded by one (1) month of data collection in the preliminary stage. Therefore the timeline for the research design project can be configured in the following manner:

1. Preliminary stage – one month in duration
2. Implementation stage
    a. Preparatory stage – one week in duration
    b. Performance stage – five weeks in duration
    c. Evaluation stage – one week in duration.

During the one month of preliminary state, the researcher utilized a triangulation approach in order to collect the requisite data for the project. This triangulation approach

included: 1) direct observation of the ten teachers; 2) children involvement through interviews and 3) a group interview session with the teachers.

Prior to implementation of the seven-week training sessions, the researcher conducted a pre-interview questionnaire session with a group of students from grades two thru six that currently attend Children's Church. This was necessary in order to gain an understanding of the teachers teaching style and their use of different tools, resources and methodologies.

The preparatory activities included the pre-test questionnaire with the teachers to determine their present thought condition. This was necessary in order to be fully engaged prior to the performance phase of the project. The information gathered and extracted from the questionnaire directly influenced and assisted the researcher in developing the curriculum necessary for the training model.

According to Robert Allen Peterson's book, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*, he discusses the importance of asking the right questions when conducting research.

> Like amount of structure, degree of directness is a continuous dimension; it refers to how much is disclosed to study participants about the purpose of a research project, the sponsor of the project, what a researcher hopes to learn from the project, and the nature of the questions asked. At one extreme, full disclosure means that study participants are told virtually everything about a research project, including its purpose and sponsor, and all questions are transparent in that they directly focus on the phenomena, issues, or topics of interest. [10]

As the above quote establishes, there are certain questions and themes that needed to be brought out in this ministry model in order to draw together the most relevant

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[10] Robert Allen Peterson, *Constructing Effective Questionnaires* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000), 5.

information to be measured. The researcher decided to use closed ended questions for the questionnaire because according to Rae and Parker, "answers are uniform and therefore facilitates comparisons among respondents and also makes the question clearer to the respondent."[11]

The researcher designed a Christian education model, based on biblical teachings of scripture in order to show measured results from the pre/post-test questionnaire administered. The pre/post questionnaire and recorded observations searched for attitude adjustment, sought knowledge of the participants and generated questions that provoked acknowledgement of effective teaching. The researcher also measured the participants' ability to move beyond the traditional experience of teaching to a more effective and exciting way, which involved engaging the students.

According to W. James Potter in his book, *An Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods*, he states that "Observation is the technique of gathering data through direct contact with an object, usually another human being. The researcher watches the behavior and documents the properties of the object". He further states that; one source of observational data in connection with interviewing is the participants' behaviors, facial expressions, gestures, . . . and other nonverbal indications.[12] The researcher observed the participants' instructional strategies and interactions in their classrooms. Although this was a simple process, the data generated provided a wealth of

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[11] Louis M. Rae and Richard A. Parker, *Designing and Conducting Survey Research* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1997), 32.

[12] W. James Potter, *An Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1996), 98.

information that strengthened creative teaching instruction and improved overall outcome.

John Cresswell, further suggests that, one may also consider the use of peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.[13] The researcher decided to utilize one of her professional associates to review and ask questions about the qualitative study in order that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher.

During the five-week performance phase, the researcher served as the facilitator in the teaching of a curriculum that contained six workshops. Workshop one consisted of two hours in length and gave ten participants a clear understanding of what will take place during the next six weeks. It consisted of the welcome, introduction and a brief overview of the meeting context, goal, outcome and the pre-test questionnaire for teachers. Workshops two through five were held for one hour and a half. Workshop two consisted of the Biblical Foundation on Teaching and Jesus as the Master Teacher; the third workshop focused on Creative Teaching Methods, Tools and Resources. Workshop four was the importance of Preparing a Lesson Plan. A step-by-step approach was presented to the participants. The participants were then asked to apply what they had learned by actually writing a lesson plan that would be implemented in children church. Workshops five and six consisted of actual biblical teaching lessons with practical activities for different grade levels.

In order to illustrate different aspects of teaching using additional tools, resources and methods, the researcher utilized existing lessons from the following authors; Barbara

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[13] Creswell, 192.

Peacock, *Called to Teach*, Delia Halverson, *Ready, Set, Teach* and Donald Griggs, *Teaching Today's Teachers to Teach.*

Once the performance phase was completed, the teachers participated in the third phase, the evaluation phase. The researcher performed an Evaluation Assessment to determine the effectiveness of the overall training workshops. By administering children and teachers post-test that conformed to the condition of the initial pre-test. Both qualitative assessments and practical evaluation tools were used to measure the progress. This helped to determine whether the workshops made an impression in the transformation of the children and the teacher's outlook toward change.

The results of the ministry model should provide the teachers with a better understanding of the importance of utilizing additional tools, resources and methodologies when teaching. It should also provide an attitudinal change about their present practice of the teaching ministry in which they currently serve.

The following outline of the scheduled training sessions are as follows:

Seven Week Training Outline

Week One: February 20, 2013

Workshop Training Session One

- Welcome, Introduction and Overview
- Opening Prayer
- Conduct Pre-Interview Question for Children
- Conduct Pre-Test Teacher Questionnaire
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

Week Two: February 27, 2013

Workshop Training Session Two

- Opening Prayer
- Teaching Session
    - Biblical Foundation on Teaching
    - Jesus the Master Teacher
- Closing Prayer

Week Three: March 6, 2013

Workshop Training Session Three

- Opening Prayer
- Teaching Session
    - Active Learning Styles
    - Creative Teaching Methods
    - Tools and Resources
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

Week Four: March 13, 2013

Workshop Training Session Four

- Opening Prayer
- Teaching Session
    - Preparing a Lesson Plan
    - Five Parts of a Lesson Plan
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

Week Five: March 20, 2013

Workshop Training Session Five

- Opening Prayer
- Teaching Lesson
    - Create in me a Clean Heart: Psalms 51:10
    - Noah and the Ark: Genesis 9:8-17
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

Week Six: March 27, 2013

Workshop Training Session Six

- Opening Prayer
- Teaching Session
    - Learning to Forgive: Joseph Story
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

Week Seven: April 3, 2013

Workshop Training Session Seven

- Opening Prayer
- Conduct Post-Test Teacher Questionnaire
- Conduct Post-Interview Questions for Children
- Open Forum
- Closing Prayer

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

One day children who now attend children church will become adults. Will these individuals possess the Biblical foundation to sustain them along with being able to spread their ingrained knowledge? Because it is critically important, teachers need ongoing training, through the means of workshop sessions.

Through Christian education, the researcher developed a curriculum model that includes biblical, historical, and theoretical information pertinent to teaching children. Material will be presented that will allow the participants to read and discuss what God has set before them. It will be emphasized that teaching is not a new concept but one that has come down through generations.

In this chapter the researcher developed a model that was separated into three distinct phases: 1) the preparatory phase; 2) the performance phase; and 3) the evaluation phase. It was important for the researcher to engage in the data collection process before she could initiate work on the three phases of the project. The time needed to accomplish the stages was seven weeks.

The Preparatory Phase

The ministry model addressed the need for utilization of tools, resources and methodologies for preparation of current teachers and perspective teachers. While working as the Children's Ministry Servant Leader, the researcher was able to become involved with the teachers on a regular basis. It was during that time that she observed a lack of creativity, lack of utilization of tools, resources and methodologies in presentation of the curriculum. This led the researcher to question why several teachers had a desire to teach but seemed to demonstrate the lack of creativity needed for teaching.

From January 20, 2013 to February 13, 2013, the researcher began observing the teachers and children at Mt. Ennon Children's ministry. This experience was new and exciting for the participants as well as the researcher.

The triangulation system of investigation used during this period of time included three social research tools: pre-test teacher questionnaire, children's interview and direct observation. This is what has been demonstrated as the multiple-method approach that would possibly result in clarification or the collection of more data.

The educational curriculum workshops were held with several context associates and participants beginning February 20, 3013 to April 3, 2013, with the evaluation for content and effectiveness held April 5 - 7, 2013.

The workshops were designed to build a structured foundation leading up to designing a lesson plan and ending in teaching the lesson. They were taught in order to demonstrate the utilization of tools, resources and methodologies. The children's interview session brought out the fact that teachers were boring, the information being taught was over their heads and they were not engaged in the lesson. As a result, the

researcher placed great emphasis on the art of presenting lessons in a way where the children would be excited and engaged.

The Performance Stage

During the winter of 2013 the researcher had an opportunity to facilitate seven focus group sessions. The sessions were implemented as a model to provide teachers with the knowledge of the available tools, resources and methods that would by chance increase creativity in teaching. Creativity is a major factor in providing an environment that motivates students to learn. Teachers must take the initiative to engage students in all aspects of the learning experience so that the classroom is brought alive and is conducive to positive learning.[1]

Creativity was illustrated through topics ranging from (Biblical Foundation on Teaching, Jesus the Master Teacher, Creative Teaching Methods, Tools and Resources and Preparing a Lesson Plan). The materials for the training sessions were designed not only for present teachers but also for those having a desire to teach.

Initial Focus Group

Prior to the administration of the pre-test questionnaire, each of the participants signed an Informed Consent Form that allowed the researcher to process and document the results in the doctoral program at United Theological Seminary. *(Appendix A)* As a way to set the tone and expectation during the initial focus group, the researcher shared information concerning her personal and professional journey that led up to the

[1] Peacock, 75.

foundation of this research project. She also shared a personal testimony about how she did not gain a good biblical foundation when she was a child from her Sunday school teachers. The researcher's sole purpose for designing this ministry model was so that teachers will begin to teach in a way that children are able to gain a good quality biblical foundation, and not miss the opportunity because of their teacher's lack of creativity, enthusiasm or thoroughness in the Word.

Children's Pre/Post Interview Session

The best way to determine if the current teachers are effective in using any type of tools, resources and methodologies was to conduct a Pre-Interview session with children. This allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of their current learning environment. The interview session was initiated by asking the children to describe their current teacher. Then they were asked to describe their ideal teacher. This was essential to measure teachers and to determine the level of responsiveness in their students' understanding, skills development and their ability to apply the information that was taught. While the development of skills can best be measured over a long term, the students' understanding can effectively be measured through interviews.

The interview session was administered before the workshops to enable the researcher to be familiar with the students' level of awareness before beginning the workshops and after to determine how that awareness changed after the participants attended the workshop sessions. According to Rea and Parker, there are many advantages of in-person interviews. The main reason is that people often feel more comfortable

sharing their feelings and information verbally than in written form, and will therefore tend to provide more insight into the issue at hand.[2]

The interviews were audio recorded as well as video recorded then later transcribed by the researcher. As indicated in *You and Your Action Research Project*, the authors affirm that recording is a way of catching informal conversations and discussions about your research. They further state that video recording is as near to reality as it is possible to get because it captures the non-verbal, as well as the verbal, messages that are being sent.[3]

During the pre-interview session, the children were excited to have a voice. However, they wanted to make certain that the interview session was confidential. The researcher assured them it would be kept confidential. At that point, the children were more relaxed and open to share their views. They shared how they actually felt about their teachers and why they are not engaged or excited when they are in class.

The interview questions (*Appendix B*) requested information that allowed the children to engage in open discussion and be honest about their teacher's knowledge and preparation for teaching. The questions asked, also identified whether their teacher utilized any creative tools, resources or different methods in the classroom. The children were also asked about their ability to relate to bible stories and share them with others.

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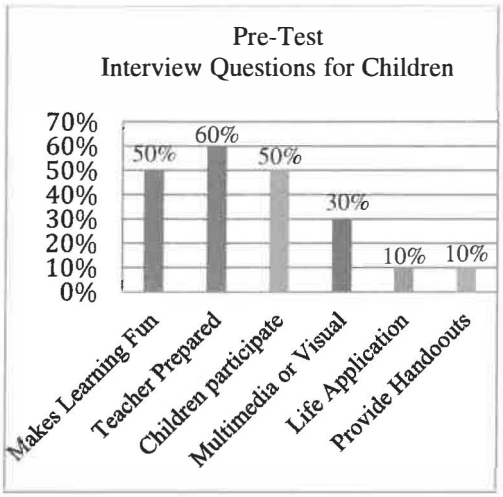
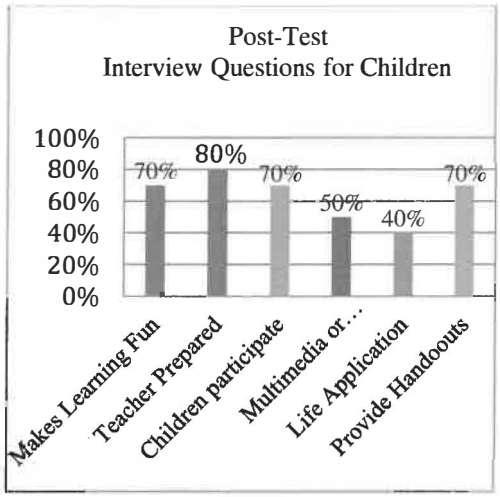
[2] Rae and Parker, 8.

[3] McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 126-127.

Pre and Post Test Children Interview Comparison





The transcribed information indicated that 50% stated their teacher makes learning fun, 60% of teachers are prepared when they come to class, 50% of teachers allow students to participate in discussion, 30% of teachers use multimedia or visual mechanisms (drama, puppets, role playing, storytelling, technology, arts and crafts), 10% stated teachers use life experiences in their lessons and only 10% provided handouts.

After the training sessions, the children were administered a post-test and the results indicated that the numbers increased. The data indicated that 70% of the teachers are now making learning fun, 80% are prepared when they come to class, 70% allow students to participate in discussion, 50% use multimedia or visual mechanisms (drama, puppets, role playing, storytelling, technology, arts and crafts), 40% stated teachers are now using life application in their lessons and 70% are providing handouts.

Pre/Post Test Teacher Questionnaire

The researcher conducted a Pre and Post Test Teacher Questionnaire to determine the participants' current knowledge, attitude and willingness toward teaching. It was

important to determine their level of understanding in utilizing different tools, resources and methodologies. As Joseph Murphy, states in *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* he suggests: "The law of action and reaction is universal. Your thought is action, and the action is the automatic response of your subconscious mind to your thought. Watch your thoughts!"[4] The changing of attitude and thoughts during the treatment of this ministry model is what the researcher monitored.

The results from the pre and post-test of the ten individuals who participated in the focus group were analyzed and the following results were identified. Question 1 and 2 asked the participant's to identify their gender and age. Of the ten participants 80% were females and 20% were males. The age bracket revealed that 10% ranged in ages of eighteen and thirty, 20% were between thirty-one and forty and 70% were ages forty-one and over.

The researcher was more interested in finding out the results from question 3. How were you selected or chosen to serve in the Children's Ministry? The results brought more clarification about the teachers teaching styles, creativity, enthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm when teaching. It was determined that 0% of the teachers were selected by Pastoral appointment, 20% was recommended by someone, 40% came as a result of an announcement indicating a need for teachers and 40% were selected by either being solicited or some other unknown reason. Having teachers come forward to teach is a great idea, but the process of selecting teachers is where the problem could arise. To teach is a work of serious responsibility, but to teach the Bible to children is an especially sacred vocation, one that is not to be taken lightly.

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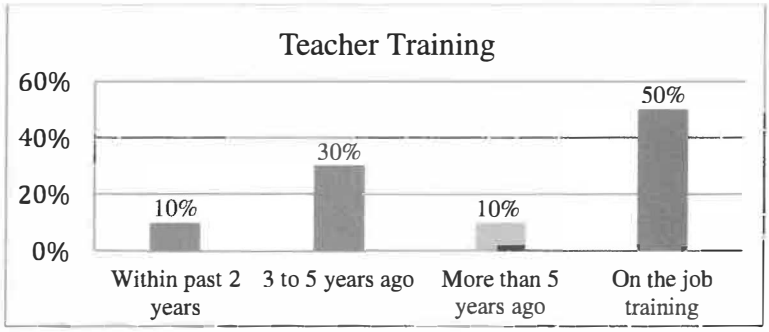
[4] Joseph Murphy, *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* (New York, NY: Courier Dover Publications, 2010), 35.

There were additional concerns with reference to the teacher's level of training experience. Question 4: When was the last time you received teacher training?



The participants' responses represented different levels of teachers training, 10% indicated they had received training within the past two years, 30% received training but it was between three to five years ago, 10% indicated more than five years ago and the remaining 50% indicated the only training they received was on the job training while in the classroom.

Of the 50% of teachers who had on the job training it is important to note that while within this situation, the prospective teacher was only observing and assisting within the classroom where they would ultimately teach. This gives the prospective teacher time to become acquainted with the children, and with the resources. This makes the valid point that all teachers should receive training on a continuous basis, whether it is given quarterly or semi-annually.

Teachers who indicated they had received training on the job indicated that they were not pleased with being sent to a classroom with a curriculum and no instructions. As a result, this has resulted in a large turnover in teachers leaving the classroom before they get to know the children or before the children had an opportunity to interface with the teacher.

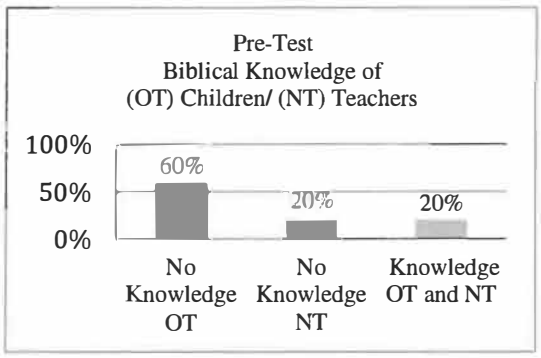
It's important to see how long individuals have been serving in the Children's ministry. Question 5: How long have you been serving in the Children's Ministry? The responses indicated 60% have been in ministry more than ten years; 10% have been serving between five to ten years, 20% between three to five years, with the remaining 10% less than three years. One individual indicated that they recently joined the teaching staff within the past two months.

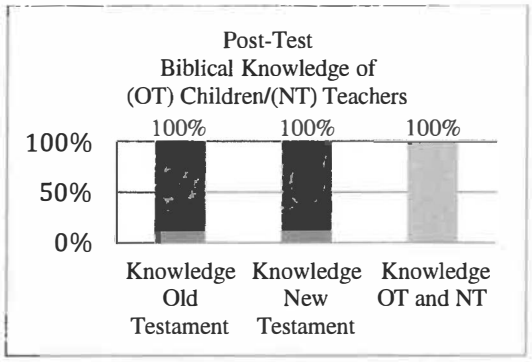
This data is significant in relation to the age and experience of the participants. Less than half of the teachers reported having over five years of teaching experience. With an overwhelming majority of the teachers are over the age of forty and received training only when they entered into the classroom. This could be one of the problems with the teachers not being able to bring creativity to the classroom. Many of the teachers teaching style is dated and they have not received the proper training. It is important to note that age and length of time in a position does not necessarily equate to experience.

Question 6: Do you think it is the church's role to develop current and potential teachers? The responses reflected an overall 100% felt it is necessary and vital for the church to invest in the training of their teachers. Many of the teachers have never been in a Christian teaching environment until they entered the classroom. One participant responded by stating that the teachers have quarterly teachers' meetings, but no teachers training or seminars to help them become more effective teachers.

It was important to see if the teachers had any prior knowledge of what the Bible says about the responsibility of teachers and teaching children. This was necessary because if one claim to have the gift of teaching it is important to have knowledge of what the Bible says about teaching.

Question 7 and 8: Knowledge of the Old Testament text that speaks about teaching children and the New Testament text that speaks about the role of a teacher.



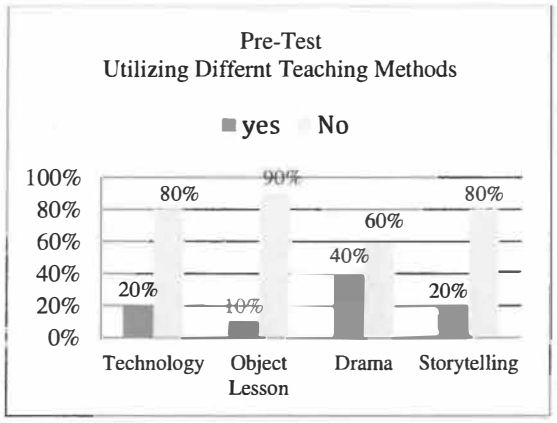


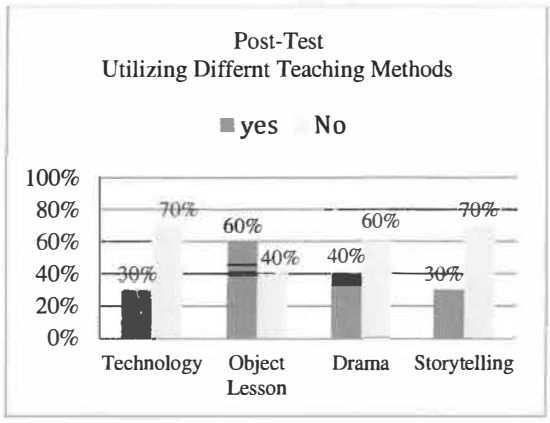
Based on the information gathered, 60% of the participants had no knowledge about the scripture, which speaks directly to teachers. Twenty percent (20%) had knowledge of the text, which talks about teaching children, and 20% actually had knowledge of the Old and New Testament texts.

After the model had been administered, 100% of the teachers now have knowledge and more appreciation of being a teacher and teaching children. They recognized the seriousness of the teacher's responsibility and the accountability for the lives they are teaching.

In order for the training to be applicable, there was interest in learning what methods the teachers currently use in presenting the curriculum. Different strategies and learning aids affect children differently. A teacher must be able to identify which strategies are best utilized within his/her setting.

Question 9: Besides lecture, what tools, resources or methods do you use when presenting your lessons?

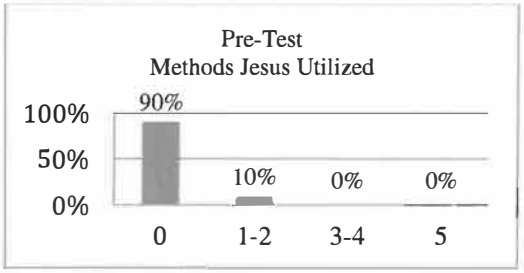


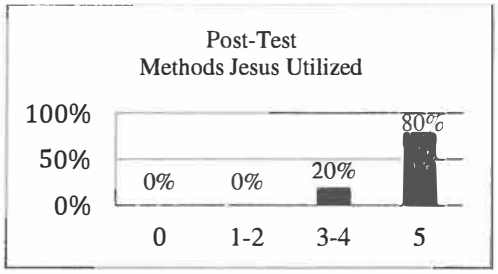


When asked 30% indicated that they incorporated technology in their lesson, 60% utilized object lessons, 40% have used drama and 30% use storytelling. During the post test the teachers' response to utilizing different methods improved, 70% are now using technology, 60% are incorporating objects in the lessons, 60% are now utilizing drama while 30% are using storytelling. Although storytelling only increased by a small percentage the teachers felt they needed more time and training. They enjoyed being introduced to the different methods, but realize that the use of the methods would require some adjusting.

Since Jesus was used as the model teacher, it was important to find out whether the teachers have knowledge of the different methods that Jesus used when teaching.

Question 10: Identify five methods that Jesus utilized when teaching?





It was striking to find out that only 10% of the teachers could list any of the methods that Jesus used when teaching in order to get his point across in a very simplistic manner. The other 90% just left the question blank. After the model 80% of the participants are now able to list at least five of the methods and 20% were able to list either three or four. Many teachers indicted that they now have a clear understanding of the necessity of using different methods.

Another important aspect of instructional teaching is writing a lesson plan. What the teacher expects the students to learn (objectives), how they are going to learn, and how the objective will be measured. The researcher was interested in knowing how many of the participants have written a lesson plan, because it ensures that the teacher has planned a lesson and they remain on task. Question 11: Are you able to write an effective lesson plan? Of the ten participants'30% have written a lesson plan but it was more than five years ago. The other 70% indicated that they just use the curriculum as it is written. After working through writing a lesson plan, the teachers now recognize that the curriculum is only a template written for a variety of individuals, not focused on the individuals, which they are teaching. The teachers indicated they understand why it is important to write a plan that is suitable for the individuals they are teaching. After learning how to prepare a lesson plan, many of the teachers confessed that they struggled

at first because it required a lot of preparation. As a result of the training, 90% of the teachers are now writing lesson plans that are more focused on the individuals that they are teaching. Ten percent (10%) or one teacher is still teaching the same way, not utilizing the curriculum as written.

Training Workshops

According to Peacock in her book, *Called to Teach*, she points out that the use of different methods brings exciting, interactive experiences into the classroom. It also speaks about engaging the audience and sharpening ones tools and resources for creative teaching. Teachers must be prepared to engage and challenge their students using a variety of classroom resources and techniques.[5]

An ancient Chinese proverb says: "Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand."[6] Just as the proverb says, the researcher will tell, show and involve the participants in each of the seven workshop sessions.

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[5] Peacock, 72.

[6] Anonymous.

WORKSHOP SESSION ONE

Welcome, Overview and Get Acquainted

Setting the Stage

- ✓ Welcome and Introduction
  - Introduction
  - The purpose of these sessions and what will be accomplished.
  - What will be expected?
  - Explanation of the pre and post-test survey
  - Commitment statement and the informed consent.

- ✓ Getting acquainted with teachers
  - Each participant will share a personal event with the person sitting next to him or her. When task is completed, the researcher will point out that they have just told a short story.

- ✓ Ground Rules
- ✓ Overview of Training Sessions Context, Goal and Outcome

Information

- ✓ Pre-Interview Questions for Children
- ✓ Pre Test Teacher Questionnaire

Open Forum

Closing

This two hour workshop session introduced the Ministry Model to the participants and provided an interview and questionnaire session. The workshop was held with many individuals who had never attended any type of workshop. The individuals who attended indicated they had no knowledge of some of the information with regard to being a teacher or teaching children.

In attendance at the initial workshop were the children and the participants of the training session. This turned out to be more significant because the children were able to speak to and with the adults informally and directly. The adults were extremely receptive to the children. By the end of the session, participants understood why it is vitally

important for adults, children and the church to be committed to working together in the area of Christian Education.

The seven training workshop sessions were designed to enhance the existing Children church ministry by educating teachers on what the Bible says about the importance of being a teacher and the necessity of teaching children. In addition, they gained knowledge about the qualities of an effective teacher and the common pitfalls of teachers. The teachers were challenged to meet the goal of becoming a more creative teacher by utilizing different tools, resources and methodologies in the presentation of their lessons. The expected outcome is that teachers gain a better understanding about teaching children and utilizing creativity in their instructional teaching.

WORKSHOP SESSION TWO

Biblical Foundation on Teaching and Jesus the Master Teacher

Teaching Lessons

- ✓ Biblical Foundation on Teaching
- ✓ What the New Testament say about teachers
- ✓ What the Old Testament say about teaching children

Information

- ✓ Jesus the Master Teacher
- ✓ Characteristics of Jesus Teaching
- ✓ Teaching Methods employed by Jesus
- ✓ Jesus Teaching Principles for Education

Handout: How Jesus Taught

Discussion Questions

Closing

This workshop was designed to communicate what the Bible says about teachers and children. It will illustrate how to model the example of Christ's teaching in order that God's principles are made relevant.

This session challenged every teacher to grasp what it really means to be a teacher and how vitally important it is for the children to receive effective teaching in order to be transformed. The expected outcome is that the participants will be more excited about displaying their gift of teaching in and out of the classroom.

The workshop was based on biblical texts taken from the Old and New Testament. Deuteronomy 6:6-9, speaks to the teaching of children, it states:

> And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

New Testament Scripture James 3:1 speaks to the role of Teachers:

> Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers; because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. (NIV)
>
> My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (KJV)

The training pointed out that teachers must be aware of the fact that children have many circumstances and situations that they are dealing with single parent households, step-parents, foster parents, both parents working due to economic, just to name a few. They are also a part of a technological world where Computers, Ipads, Laptops, Ipods, and Video games have become their playmates. Because of our technological world, a great many things have changed. But the needs of children remain the same.

As a way to introduce the study of Christian education and get the participants involved, the researcher opened with an icebreaker by asking a question. Questions are the least expensive resource for teaching and yet may be the most valuable resource available to the teacher. It was essential for everyone to understand that when you ask a question, you will get different results but many of the children will be involved in the lesson through questioning.

The researcher utilized a handout "How Jesus Taught", *(Appendix C – Handout #1)* from Barbara Peacock book, *Called to Teach*, as an exercise to illustrate how Jesus, the master teacher, taught in various settings. This exercise allowed the teachers and the researcher to reflect and determine what teacher made a great impact in their lives. It was also used as a self-reflection for the teachers to determine what characteristics they possess as a teacher.

As a result of the training session, the teachers indicated that after researching the scripture and seeing how Jesus taught, it brought a greater understanding of the importance of making certain that all children are included in the lesson. They also understood that what they are teaching will make an impact in the lives of the children.

WORKSHOP SESSION THREE

Active Learning Style and Creative Teaching Methods

Opening Ice Breaker

- ✓ What part of the body are you and why?

Teaching Lesson

- ✓ Active Learning Styles
  Handout: Dale Cone's Learning Styles
- ✓ Two Kinds of Creative Teaching
- ✓ Creative Tools and Resources

Information

- ✓ Why use Active Learning
  - Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic

Handout: Creative Teaching Tools and Resources

- Visual Aids, Computer, Bible exploration/application, Drama, Movement Activities, Have them live it, Pictures, Memory Verses

Discussion Questions

Closing

This workshop session has been designed for participants to gain an understanding of the different styles in which individual students learn. It will also examine what creativity is and what it is not when it comes to using available tools, resources and methodologies. The ultimate goal is for the participants to experience Bible learning activities and be equipped with creative teaching methods that would demonstrate how to make application of information.

This session informed the teachers that within their classroom, different learning styles exist. By using the Dale Cone diagram it illustrated that verbal symbols are the least effective method in teaching. It also pointed out that direct, purposeful learning, such as hands-on or field experience are the most effective learning styles that exist.

As a demonstration of creative teaching, the participants had to indicate: What part of the body they are and why? This was done as a way to demonstrate that just like all the body parts are different, everyone in your class is different and so are the learning styles of each individual.

Before one can become a creative teacher, they must first know what a creative teacher is and how to go from being ordinary to extraordinary in the classroom. The

researcher informed the participants that according to Delia Halverson, in her book, *Ready, Set, Teach,* she states that there are two kinds of creative people. "One who is *adaptive*, that person looks at the same thing as everyone else and sees something better. Then there is the *innovative* person, who puts improbable thoughts and objectives together and come up with something different." *(Appendix C – Handout #3)*

The participants were then introduced to Dale Cone which diagrams effectiveness of learning. *(Appendix C – Handout #2)* According to the research, the least effective method involved in learning is verbal, listening to the spoken words. The most effective involves, direct, purposeful learning experiences, such as hands-on.

The researcher demonstrated the different types of learning styles by handing the participants three index cards one with each of the learning styles listed. They had to list the names of their students who best fit each learning style. This exercise was done so that teachers could see if they understood their students learning styles and the best way to design a lesson to reach each student.

What was determined during the training session was that the teachers really did not know their students as well as they thought they did. They explained that now they understand why some students come to class and just sit, while others may be more involved and some just look at them like they do not have a clue about what is going on.

WORKSHOP SESSION FOUR

Preparing a Lesson Plan

Teaching Lesson
- ✓ Effective lesson planning

Information
- ✓ Preparing a Lesson Plan
  - o Aim, Goal, Objective, Methods
- ✓ Five Parts of a Lesson Plan
  - o Inviting, Informing, Investigating, Illustrating, Inspiring

Handout: Lesson Planning Worksheet

Discussion Questions

Closing

This workshop session will acquaint the participants with how to prepare a lesson plan by using Donald Griggs book "*Teaching Today's Teachers to Teach*". It describes the five parts of a lesson plan that will enable the teacher to communicate the main ideas, help students accomplish some of the objectives, and organize teaching activities and resources.

The goal is for teachers to be able to write a lesson plan that includes illustrative materials for gaining the attention of the students and show how to apply the Bible to everyday life.

From the responses of the pre-test questionnaire, the researcher gained a clear understanding that the teachers were unable to prepare a lesson plan. Since learning begins with the reception of data by the five senses, the researcher used it as an opening to introduce writing a lesson plan. The participants had to get up, which required movement, and articulate each sense. Because the lesson plan is written in five parts

(Inviting, Informing, Investigating, Illustrating and Inspiring), the researcher used each one of the senses to tie into the lesson planning. The participants were provided with a Lesson Planning Worksheet *(Appendix C – Handout #4),* which they were given a biblical text and had to write out an actual lesson plan.

The participants' initial response to the lesson plan was, I never wrote a lesson out before, and all I do is read the curriculum straight from the book. This is going to be a challenge. Many looked at the form and stated this is a lot of information that needs to be filled out. After going through each step of the lesson plan, the participants acknowledged that it was not that hard to complete. They all agreed that it takes time but they would be willing to give it a try.

They recognized that teaching is more than just telling. It involves the learner, and allows them the students the opportunity to think through the Bible lesson. Others realize that by writing out a lesson plan it allows them to present a clear and simple lesson that includes activities related to the lesson and helps the student face real problems.

WORKSHOP SESSION FIVE AND SIX

Biblical Teaching Lessons

Teaching Lesson

- ✓ Create in me a Clean Heart: Psalms 51:1-11
- ✓ Noah and the Ark: Genesis 6:9-8; 9:8-17
- ✓ Learning to Forgive – The Joseph Story
  Genesis 37:12-36; 42:1-26; 45:1-15

Information

- ✓ Effective use of Tools, Resources and Methodologies

Handout: Sample Lesson Plans *(Appendix C – Handout #5-8)*

Closing

These workshops were designed to work through biblical texts and illustrate how to present an effective lesson utilizing a lesson plan and the various tools, resources and methodologies for children of different age groups. The goal is for teachers to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and application of writing out a lesson plan and demonstrate the use of different methods for the Bible stories.

When the researcher taught the Noah story, she utilized technology, which required the participants to watch a video on Noah Building the Ark as a way of introducing multimedia into the classroom. The researcher also designed a Jeopardy game on the computer for the participants to play, which reinforced the bible story.

The response from the teachers was that they had no idea that technology would help make teaching and learning more meaningful, fun and interactive. They had an opportunity to see how technology improves learning and offers effective ways to reach different types of learners and measure student understanding.

To illustrate an object lesson the researcher taught Psalms 51, Creating Clean Heart, taken from the story of David. The researcher distributed soap, clean heart and a dirty heart to each participant. They used the soap to try and clean the dirt off the dirty heart.

The teachers indicated that they never realized that something so simple could help illustrate a lesson. They began to give other ideas for teaching the lesson like using one glass that is clean inside and out and another that is clean outside but dirty on the inside. From the illustration of the lesson, the teachers began to think outside of the box and use critical thinking to generate new ideas. This let the researcher know that they were excited about using additional tools and methods.

Workshop six required the use of tools, resources and methods in order to illustrate the lesson. The researcher utilized the Joseph story about forgiveness. The participants had to write about an experience, define a word, demonstrate what they learned by writing an action plan and explore the text to determine steps to forgiveness.

After the completion of all the training sessions, the participants were so excited and they inquired about where they could find additional information to help guide them in their teaching. The researcher provided a list of Websites and resources and encouraged the participants to utilize them when preparing and teaching different aspects of their lessons. The websites included Bible Quizzes, Videos, Arts and Crafts, Bible Games and activities. *(Appendix C – Handout #9)*

WORKSHOP SESSION SEVEN

Post Test and Observation Evaluation

Setting the Stage
- ✓ Overview of Comprehensive Workshops
- ✓ Open Forum and Discussion

Information
- ✓ Post-Interview Questions for Children
- ✓ Post Test Teacher Questionnaire
- ✓ Observation Evaluation Sheet

Closing
- ✓ Thanks for their participation

This workshop session is designed to review the entire training sessions and present the participants with their post-test interview, questionnaires and evaluations of the training session.

The Evaluation Phase

Direct Observation

The researcher elected to use an observation evaluation sheet (*Appendix B*) to address the main areas of concern with teachers. The results from the observation surprised the researcher because it not an easy task to get individuals who have done something one way to all of a sudden change. As a result of the training, the teachers demonstrated a level of excitement and enthusiasm in the classroom.

Data Table 3: Pre and Post Test Observation Evaluation Outcomes

	Pre-Test Response	Post Test Response	Differentials Pre-Test vs. Post Test
Question 1:Use of lesson plan in teaching	2	10	+8
Question 2: Opportunity for student participation	6	9	+3
Question 3: Outside resources and handouts used	1	10	+9
Question 4:Teacher preparation for class session	3	10	+7
Question 5: Use of learning activities (skits, games, technology)	1	7	+6
Question 6: Relate biblical subject matter to life situation	2	8	+6
Question 7: Student inquiry into subject matter	3	5	+2
Question 8: Use of different methodologies	2	9	+2
Question 9: Attitude toward opinion of students	6	10	+4
Question 10: Developing student skills in Bible use	2	10	+8

The discipline of direct observation was not limited to what was seen, but it also applied to that which was heard by the researcher. According to Rae and Parker, observation involves the direct study of behavior by simply watching the subjects of the study without intruding upon them and recording certain critical natural responses to their

environment.[7] The researcher and several volunteers from the children's ministry conducted observation of the teachers as they were engaged in presenting the lessons. Upon observation, the researcher chose not to have any vocal input. She became an observer whose intent was to investigate and offer a narrative description of what transpired in the classroom.

This method allowed the individuals to observe the participants and test the ministry model to see, if as a result of the training, the teachers began utilizing the tools, resources and methodologies to increase instructional creativity and children's participation.

After compiling the overall data from the observation sheets, the researcher noted that 90% utilized new tools, resources and methodologies. The other 10% continued to utilize the old traditional style of presenting the lesson. The participants began the lesson by saying read the verse and tell me what you think. As stated in the training workshops, "It is really not about what one thinks it's about what the Word actually says to help transform the lives of the individuals." Could it be that the participant is still using the old traditional way of teaching because they do not like change? Well, times have changed and our world is more connected than ever before. We are a fast paced society driven by up-to-the-minute information, new innovations and technology.[8] There are now more creative ways of presenting the lesson where it can be fun, exciting, enjoyable and memorable. Teachers must change in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing society.

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[7] Rae and Parker, 3.

[8] Peacock, 72.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The highlight of this chapter is to review the researcher's evaluation of this ministry model and present an evaluation of Mt. Ennon Children Church teachers. The researcher prayed continuously seeking the Lord's guidance on how to develop this ministry model based on interviews, pre and post-test questionnaires, observation and evaluations. This ministry model is intended to encourage and equip teachers, so that they may be more efficient in fulfilling their calling as a teacher.

The researcher anticipates this training model will pave the way for improving the teaching styles of teachers working with children in our local churches. She hopes that teachers will see more than their short perspective when placed in a position as teacher, but see the need for transformation of the children whose lives are placed in their hands. Transformation begins when we realize that God is speaking to us through the stories that we read. It begins when the story begins to tell individuals something about themselves.

The researcher would like to point out that, when she first began to work on this ministry model, she did not realize that there was so much to be done in the area of teaching until she started assembling data from the questionnaires. It is her belief that whoever reads this work is free to make their own suggestions based on their own findings. On the other hand, the researcher trusts that this project will form a backdrop

for whoever builds on it with Jesus as the "Master Teacher" which is exemplified throughout the Bible.

God desires that children be drawn to Him as they learn of Him. It is known that children learn as they participate in well-planned and well-prepared learning experience. Children learn as they interact with adults and other children. They learn as they observe the lives of the significant adult in their environment. Because of the transformation which will take place in time, they will be able to share with others what they have learned and will begin to grow.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 speaks about the commandments, the text says, "Impress them on your children. Discuss them when you are at home, when you are at the park, before going to sleep and even upon your early rise in the morning. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Although it is the family responsibility, the entire community must join together with the parents to nurture the next generation together in the context of a symbolic relationship among the families in the community.

One of the greatest tragedies of the church is that so little attention has been given to the preparation of its teachers. It does not matter the size or how well organized a Sunday school class may be, it will always pivot around the educational triad, the teacher, the lesson, and the class. Of these, the first and most important factor is the teacher. In fact, the teacher stands as the central factor in the entire Sunday school.

It became apparent that from the discussion with the participants during the class time and the conversation following each session that some were lacking clear direction on how to use tools, resources, and methods in teaching. The researcher was delighted to

learn that the time spent on this project revealed positive comments that will benefit the researchers, teachers and the children ministry.

Christian education continues to be a vital instrument to African Americans. It is hoped that this ministry model has provided the African American community with some strategies on how to teach children. The Children church at Mt. Ennon is where children begin to acquire the necessary skills for life: relationships building and creative thinking. It is where you learn who you are and most important that God loves you.

It has been known that children which are reared within a Christian home with the influence of Sunday school, then they learn the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give wisdom that leads to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. It would be a grave injustice to children to provide them with anything less than caring and saved teachers to share God's Word.

Today's children have many outside influences that they may encounter on a daily basis and they must realize that the only way to cope and struggle with these negative influences is by understanding the Word of God. How can anyone expect the children to get involved, if they do not understand what is being said to them during the Sunday morning Children church? The children are the future of the church. What will the church become if they are not brought into the fold?

Teaching is extremely important because where there is a lack of knowledge, there is tragedy. Teaching should be done diligently and with all wisdom toward completeness. Not only did Jesus teach, but He fulfilled the instructions given by God.

Children church teachers must view children the way God viewed them as His special children. Since it is the goal of the Children Church to open up their lives to what

God has in store for them, it is important to help them view themselves in a loving manner. In order to grow spiritually, children must understand that God loves them unconditionally.

One of the goals for the children in the church is that they know, love, and walk with God. Meeting this goal is a complex multifaceted endeavor that involves the care, acceptance, instruction, guidance, discipline, and modeling that children need to grow up into mature people of faith.[1]

Children today are more creative in their thinking pattern and teachers must be more creative in their presentation. Many students learn on different levels teachers must structure their lessons to include every student. If a student leaves the same way they came then the teacher needs to think of a more creative way to present the lesson to ensure that every student understands the information that was presented.

Children need to know that God gave us a book filled with wisdom to help them understand life today, and that his message provides unchanging truth they will not find anywhere else. If kids do not understand the verbiage used, the lesson is lost with no hope for application.[2]

One must get away from the standard boring teaching that goes on in Sunday school or Bible study, read one verse and tell me what you think. This is clearly a demonstration of a teacher's lack of preparation, lack of training, lack of exposure and lack of resources. As a result, the researcher belief is that teachers are relying on the

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[1] Ronald T. Habermas, *Introduction to Christian Education and Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 152.

[2] Miller and Staal, 73.

students to teach the class. This method is untrustworthy because students may give feedback that is not scripture based and it could have the potential of harming students who do not know the truth.

Teachers should be prepared to teach, Eldridge says, "A teacher should not share the attitude of those who simply open their Bibles and let the Holy Spirit tell them what it means. They should study the scripture (2 Timothy 2:15). God does his part, but He also expects us to do our parts." Zuck says that teaching children "is a co-operative process, a venture involving both the human and the divine.[3]

Although teachers may have their favorite methods and techniques, such as storytelling or role-playing or lecturing, good teachers also have a model of teaching or an approach to teaching that helps to shape how and what they do. Such a model is an informed, reflective way of teaching that offers an overall guide to the teaching process and provides us with something like a roadmap for what we are doing.[4]

It is important that since students come out to learn, teachers have the responsibility to make certain that students take something with them that they can use or share with someone else. If the teacher's lesson and objectives are not centered on their students, then how will they reach their ultimate goal?

According to the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher noticed that some of the challenges the teachers are facing are due to lack of training. This is the result of negligence of biblical concept for teaching, which had been correctly demonstrated throughout the Bible. The researcher suggests that mandatory training for teachers be

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[3] Daryl Eldridge, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 47.

[4] Eldridge, 49.

given to anyone who is in a leadership position in the children's ministry or prospective teachers desiring to teach in the children's church.

The "typical" classroom is changing. Lessons are being done by video and books are being replaced by online readings, and lectures are given by Ipads that are able to be played back at anytime, anywhere. The increase of technology allows easier and more efficient access to learning materials. As long as teachers continue to teach and our students continue to come to the classroom the learning environment must be conducive to students and teachers alike.

If the Children's Church is to demonstrate that it is an educational institution, where all important instruction in the Bible may be acquired, then teacher recruitment and training must be a requirement.

It is about serving children who are delicate people in a sinful world and need more than anything to be well taught the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

We cannot wait until children grow up before we teach them about God. Children go to school to learn how to read, write and count; they also need to learn how to live, according to the intentions of our Creator. Many who have become Christians in adulthood are saddened by the fact that they did not come into a relationship with God earlier, and could have possibly avoided years of uncertainty, insecurity and doubt.

Teaching children about God is just as significant; remember that Jesus rebuked his disciples when they made the mistake of regarding children as less important than adults in ministry terms (Matt 19:13-14).

Children look to significant adults as models, and learn appropriate behavior from them. One of the key aspects of the role of Sunday school teaching is commitment. You need to be committed to the ministry, the children and the team of teachers you are working with. Children quickly pick up an idea of how much you care for them by seeing how committed you are to teaching them every week.

All teachers are learners. Regardless of how long we've been teaching for, we still have things to learn. This means that we need to have a teachable spirit, to be willing to change and to try new ideas. Experienced teachers can be a great asset to any Sunday school because they add stability. They can be an encouragement and example to new teachers. They are also in a position to develop close relationships with the children in their class.

It is important for teachers to understand that today's students are accustomed to being "connected" through technology because it brings exciting, interactive experience in their thought patterns. It challenges them to seek out more information on a particular topic of interest. Through use of technology the teacher can play music, view videos, show maps as well as show visual presentations of their lessons.

Storytelling is something that we do every day without even thinking about it and it is important to make use of it when teaching children. Just like storytelling, it is important for teachers to consider using everyday materials to illustrate biblical principles such as object lessons, games, bible quizzes, and skits to introduce the lesson.

When we think of teaching as a ministry of the church, we remember that in the midst of our tasks of sharing information, telling stories, and passing on the tradition, we are called to serve and care for those whom we teach. Our students are not objects that we

fill with knowledge, but people who need to know that they are loved and that they matter to us and to God.[5]

The researcher believes that in order for any church to maintain its cutting edge, it must keep its focus on people. It must also look at upgrading the curriculum from time to time since it is crucial to grasp that the Word of God never changes, the needs of people do, and it is necessary to target our community's needs with the Bible in a true, but creative and energetic way.

Knowledge of methods and techniques is vital for a teacher of the Bible. Although the methods and techniques from which we can draw are many and varied, it is important to have some guidelines to make our selection. Making sure they are appropriate for our students, our content, and our setting is crucial. Having personal experience with them and knowing how to use them are both important. Remembering that the purpose of any method, technique or tool is to help students learn is vital. And finally, knowing how to use and ask the right questions is at the core of good teaching.[6]

Church's would do well to welcome children as part of the church today, as Matthew 18 and 19 indicate, not just view them as "the church of tomorrow." Our efforts to teach and nurture children are an investment in the future, theirs and ours.

Using the words written by George Barna in his book, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*; can summarize this ministry model; he says it best by stating that; few parents and church leaders realize how critical it is to start developing a child's biblical worldview in the earliest years of life. The problem is complex: parents who did

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[5] Tye, *Your Calling as a Teacher*, 12.

[6] Bracke and Tye , 71-72.

not receive early spiritual training leave their children's training to the church. Yet the church often focuses on older children not realizing that a child's moral development is set by the age of nine. The answer is for churches to recognize the need to join together with parents to provide them biblical worldview training that will equip them to help their children become tomorrow's spiritually mature Church.

Personal Learning Observations

During the process of evaluation of all participants and the project, the researcher continued to pray, seeking the Lord on behalf of ways to grow spiritually. The focus group that was working throughout this project recognized the importance of trusting in the Holy Spirit to lead and guide in what has already been established in the Word of God.

She has been enriched by the importance of Children Church throughout this ministry model. First, she recognized it as a tool in providing a theological education for one's life. Second, meeting with the teachers and having open discussions about ways to improve the Children church have encouraged the researcher. Third, implementing this project greatly increased her knowledge of God's love for children and methods that can be used to enhance the curriculum. Fourth, through the reading, interviews, observation, she is more conscious of the many gifts in the children ministry and the people who have a desire to see individuals brought into the kingdom through the ministry of the Children church.

The work that has been put into this ministry model has caused her to reflect on individuals, particularly those instrumental in leading her to Christ. As a result, there are

many people just like her who are lost and who are seeking truth. She thanks God for giving her the strength to continue to build the children ministry.

Recommendations

If the children's ministry is going to move forward, it must consider the teachers who are called to teach and the children who come to learn. Updating the curriculum from time to time is helpful. It is crucial to understand that the Word of God never changes, the needs of the people do, and it is necessary to target our communities' needs with the Bible in a true, but creative and energetic way.

In order for this training to be effective, the context associates and the researcher recommended that it be presented to every new teacher going forward. Once this is implemented, the training will be organized in such a way that all prospective teachers will have an opportunity of being trained. The researcher therefore suggests that emphasis be placed on training teachers specifically for the goal of serving in the children's ministry. She is optimistic, that once the model is introduced, the teachers would encounter more excitement and enthusiasm about teaching than ever before.

On how the session could be improved, the participants indicated that more time should have been given to the presentation, as this would have given them the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned. The participants did not realize that part of this ministry model included them actually being observed while demonstrating what they had learned. The researcher felt it was important to share the results of the observation with the teachers in order to encourage them to continue to improve on their teaching style.

Future Training Workshops

In order for the researcher to continue further research, the participants were asked to list additional training sessions they believe would be helpful to their teaching development. The teachers listed a variety of topics but several themes came up repeatedly. There was an expressed need for more training centered on the use of technology, the benefit of storytelling, how to introduce drama and role play in the classroom. Also, it is important to note that preparation for teaching was the most common goal. We must realize that prior preparation prevents poor performance. One could assume that based on the data provided, that a majority of the participants were excited about learning how to utilize new tools, resources and methodologies in instructional teaching of the Word of God to children.

Final Analysis

After analyzing the data collected from the focus group, pre and post test questionnaire, interviews, observations and evaluations, the researcher utilized the information to develop the content for this ministry model. The ministry model was designed with the intention of establishing transferability. According to Creswell, transferability "refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings."[7] By collecting data from multiple data sources and thereby establishing a broader understanding of the problem, this model would be applicable and effective for training current teachers and prospective teachers

[7] Cresswell, 173-201.

not just at Mt. Ennon's Children Church, but other denominations and children ministries.

The participants demonstrated a very positive position in their response towards the training. As a result, all the participants agreed that they gained new insights from the workshops. They were particularly appreciative of the new tools, resources and methodologies that were introduced. They also indicated that the lessons, along with the handouts, were great because the handouts aided discussion and gave them new ideas on keeping the students focused on the lesson. They also provided an opportunity for students to recall the main theme and share it with others.

The participants also enjoyed the class participation, which helped them learn from other participants and develop critical thinking and clarity of thought for presentation.

The final questionnaire, which the researcher left optional, helped the researcher to continue her studies on Christian education and develop additional ways to improve the area of Christian education. The researcher wanted to know the participants thoughts on "Why they believe more teachers do not volunteer to work in the children's ministry?" Of those that answered, they believe it is because of their inadequacy in the Word of God, maybe they are fearful of making mistakes or they feel like teaching children is not their gift because it requires patience. All of the above responses are vital as it opened up a new ministry model for research on "Ways to get others excited about teaching Christian education to children."

At the end of the focus group, the participants completed the survey, which offered them an opportunity to sign up for future participation in the research project. Of

the ten participants, 100% agreed to participate by furnishing the researcher with their contact information, which included email addresses and phone numbers.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION FLYER

AND

COMMITMENT LETTERS

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVELY

Facilitator: Tracy Gavins

Bring your questions, comments and a heart ready to receive Biblical Truth!

- You will be a part of a seven-week training workshop and evaluation which will include a number of learning scenarios.
- Your comments and responses will be featured in a doctorial study and placed in a final dissertation document.
- You will be asked to be present at each scheduled workshop and participate in each training exercise. ***Perfect attendance is a must.***
- All workshops presentations will be conducted on Wednesdays from 7:00 -8:30 pm.
- All Post-Test observation and evaluations of workshop information will be conducted on the Sunday following the Wednesday session.

Workshop Schedule

Workshop 1: February 20, 2013
Meeting Overview
Pre-Test Teacher Questionnaire
Pre-Interview Questions for Children

Workshop 2: February 27, 2013
Biblical Foundation on Teaching
Jesus The Master Teacher

Workshop 3: March 6, 2013
Active Learning Styles
Creative Teaching Methods
Tools and Resources

Workshop 4: March 13 2013
Preparing a Lesson Plan
Five Parts of a Lesson Plan

Workshop 5: March 20, 2013
Create a Clean Heart
Psalms 51:1-11
Noah and the Ark
Genesis 9:8-17

Workshop 6: March 27, 2013
Learning to Forgive – Joseph Story
Genesis 37:12-36

Workshop 7: April 3, 2013
Post-Test Teacher Questionnaire
Post-Interview Questions for Children
Evaluation Exercise

Mt. Ennon Baptist Church
Children's Church Ministry
"A Caring, Christ-centered Community Church with a Kingdom Agenda"
9832 Piscataway Road * Clinton, MD 20735
Rev. Delman Coates, PhD., Senior Pastor

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

Letter of Invitation for Contextual Associates

Contextual Associates:

As part of the researcher my Doctor of Ministry Project at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, I Implemented a ministry model that will improve biblical presentation techniques through the use of creativity at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Ministry. This model will be utilized without losing the church culture of ministry and service of the current teachers. Based on this teaching model teachers will begin utilizing available resources to teach, attract and retain children's involvement through the use of drama, technology, videos, role playing, puppets and storytelling.

Because of your expertise in the area of Christian education, your assistance is needed in planning and implementing this ministry model. Your task will be to work with me to determine the design of the ministry model and to help determine the needs of the teachers at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church. The project with the teachers will consist of seven one hour sessions and will include biblical teaching and other practical activities. I would be grateful if you would consent to participating in this project at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church. If so, please sign the attached commitment form and return it to me.

Sincerely,

/s/
Minister Tracy Gavins, MDiv.
Children's Ministry Servant Leader

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

Mt. Ennon Baptist Church
9832 Piscataway Road
Clinton, MD 20735

Commitment Form for Contextual Associates

I, _____, am a member of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church, Clinton, Maryland, or a community consultant for this project. I understand that I will be participating in a Doctoral Ministry project for United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, conducted by Tracy Gavins, to help teachers begin to utilize more creative resources to teach, attract and retain children's involvement through the use of drama, technology, videos, role playing, puppets and storytelling.

I understand that I will be assisting in the planning and implementing of the project. I consent to being a contextual associate for this project. I acknowledge that Tracy Gavins has shared all the details of this project, including the details of each session with the teachers.

I agree to participate fully and commit to assisting in this endeavor by being present in each session throughout its duration. I also give permission for Tracy Gavins to use my responses from any surveys, forms or discussions, as she completes her Doctor of Ministry project.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

Letter of Invitation for Teachers at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church

Children's Church Ministry

Children Church Teachers,

As part of my work for my Doctor of Ministry Project for United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, I am conducting an action research into studying how to help teachers increase their creativity when working with children in the church. It is my desire that each teacher will be empowered as a result of this teaching model. I would be grateful if you would take part in this project.

The project will consist of six one hour sessions and will include biblical teaching and other practical activities. My data collection methods will include information from pre/post surveys and other informational forms, as well as class discussions and observations. I would be grateful if you would consent to participating in this project at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church. If so, please sign the commitment form and return it to me.

Sincerely,

/s/

Minister Tracy Gavins, MDiv.
Children's Ministry Servant Leader

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

Mt. Ennon Baptist Church
9832 Piscataway Road
Clinton, MD 20735

Commitment Form for Teachers

I, _____, am a member of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church, Clinton, Maryland, or a community consultant for this project. I understand that I will be participating in a Doctoral Ministry project for United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, conducted by Tracy Gavins, to help teachers begin to utilize more creative resources to teach, attract and retain children's involvement through the use of drama, technology, videos, role playing, puppets and storytelling.

I consent to being a participant for this project. I acknowledge that Tracy Gavins has shared all the details of this project, including the details of each session. I agree to participate fully and commit to assisting in this endeavor by being present in each session throughout its duration. I also give permission for Tracy Gavins to use my responses from any surveys, forms or discussions, as she completes her Doctor of Ministry project.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

PRE/POST TEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

PRE/POST TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

PRE/POST OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

Participants,

The purpose of this interview is to gather information on teachers for the development of a training program for teachers working with children in the Church. The results will be analyzed and used to develop and evaluate teachers at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Church. Thanks for your committed participation. (Adapted from Ammerman 1998, 241-243)

1) Does your teacher make learning fun?
☐ Yes ☐ No

2) Is your teacher prepared to teach when they come to class?
☐ Yes ☐ No

3) Are you able to ask questions and participate in class discussions?
☐ Yes ☐ No

4) Does your teacher use skits, games, role playing, puppets, storytelling or technology to teach the lesson?
☐ Yes ☐ No

5) Do your teacher use examples to help you better understand the lesson?
☐ Yes ☐ No

6) Does your teacher provide you with any handouts?
☐ Yes ☐ No

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information regarding development of a training program for teachers working with children in the church. The results will be analyzed and used to develop and evaluate teachers at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Children's Church. Thanks for your committed participation. (Adapted from Ammerman 1998, 241-243)

1) Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

2) Age ☐ 21 – 40 ☐ 41– 60 ☐ 61 and above

3) How were you selected or chosen to serve in the children's ministry?
☐ Pastoral Appointment ☐ Recommendation ☐ Announcement ☐ Solicited

4) When was the last time you received teacher training?
☐ 0– 2 years ☐ 3 – 5 years ☐ More than 5 years ☐ On the Job Training

5) How long have you been serving in the children's ministry?

☐ Less than 3 years ☐ 3– 5 years ☐ 5–10 years ☐ More than 10 years

6) Do you think it is the church's role to develop current and potential teachers?
☐ Yes ☐ No

7) Identify the New Testament text that speaks about the role of a teacher.

_____

8) Identify the Old Testament text that speaks about teaching children.

_____

9) Besides lecture, what tools, methods or outside resources do you use when presenting your lesson?
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
d) _____
e) _____

10) Identify five methods that Jesus used when teaching.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

11) Are you able to write an effective lesson plan?

☐ Yes ☐ No

A TRAINING MODEL THAT EQUIPS TEACHERS UTILIZING BIBLICAL METHODOLOGIES TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY

PRE/POST TEST

OBSERVATION EVALUATION SHEET

Class: _____ Observer: _____

1. Use of lesson plan in teaching	☐ Yes	☐ No
2. Opportunity for student participation	☐ Yes	☐ No
3. Outside resources and handouts used	☐ Yes	☐ No
4. Teacher preparation for class session	☐ Yes	☐ No
5. Use of learning activities (skits, games, technology, etc.)	☐ Yes	☐ No
6. Relate biblical subject matter to life situation	☐ Yes	☐ No
7. Student inquiry into subject matter	☐ Yes	☐ No
8. Use of different methodologies	☐ Yes	☐ No
9. Attitude toward opinion of students	☐ Yes	☐ No
10. Developing student skills in Bible use	☐ Yes	☐ No

APPENDIX C

WORKSHOP TRAINING HANDOUTS

Handout #1

How Jesus Taught[1]

1) Review the scriptures to determine how Jesus taught in various settings and situations:

How Jesus Taught	Scripture Text
With large audiences	Matthew 5:1; Mark 2:2; 3:32; 4:1
Small groups/One-on-on	Matthew 9:18-22; Luke 10:38-42
Using Parables	Luke 12:16-21; 15:1-7
Using Miracles	Matthew 9:1-8; John 6:5-14

2) As you reflect on Jesus as teacher, who were the teachers who made the greatest impact in your life? What did they teach you that was so memorable?

3) What "Christ-as-teacher" characteristics did they possess?

4) What characteristics should you possess as a teacher?

5) How do you view yourself as a teacher?

[1] Peacock, 14-15

Handout #2

Dale's Cone[2]

Dale's Cone diagrams effectiveness of learning according to the media involved in learning experiences. The chart illustrates the results of research conducted by Edgar Dale in the 1960s. According to Dale's research, the least effective method, the top of the cone, involves learning from information presented through verbal symbols, i. e. , listening to spoken words. The most effective method, the bottom of the cone, involves direct, purposeful learning experiences, such as hands-on or field experiences.

Learning Styles

Visual
These learners rely on their vision to remember what they see. They may remember a face but not a name. *(Learn best by what they see)*

Auditory
These learners rely on their ears to receive and process information. They may remember a name but not a face. *(Learn best by listening)*

Kinesthetic
These learners prefer movement. They remember what they do, touch and feel. *(Learn best with real life experiences)*

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[2] Brought to you by the Active Learning Online team at the ACU Adams Center for Teaching Excellence (accessed November 7, 2012)

Handou t#3

'Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I'll understand. " Anonymous.

Two Kinds of Creative People

Adaptive creative people look at the same thing as everyone else and see something better.

Innovative creative people put improbable thoughts and objectives together and come up with something different. [3]

[3] Halverson, 101-102.

HANDOUT 8

Who, Me? Creative?

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Creativity is not so much doing something new

AS

SEEING

something

old

in a

new way.

Creative people are:

~ willing to take risks ~ flexible ~ humorous

~ fun loving ~ tolerant of ambiguity ~open minded

~ willing to see both sides of issue ~ intuitive

~ turning things around to improve ~ curious

~ deferring judgment ~ childlike

~ spontaneous ~ questioning assumptions

~ seeing possibilities in existing things

~ looking for continuous improvement

How was Jesus a role model for creative thinking?

Permission to photocopy this handout granted for local church organization use only. Reproduced from *Ready, Set, Teach!* by Delia Halverson (www.deliahalverson.com). Copyright © 2010 by Abingdon Press.

Lesson Planning Worksheet[4]

Key Bible Passages:

Session Title:

Age Group:

Focus of the Session/Main Idea:

Objectives: During this lesson the students will be able to:

1)
2)
3)

Inviting	The opening part of the session seeks to accomplish something similar. We welcome the participants warmly. We invite them to participate in what has been planned for them. We invite them to enter into the subject matter for the session. The activities in this opening part of the lesson will invite the participants to enter into the time, space, and topic of the lesson and the teacher to enter into the world of the learners. The inviting part of the lesson sets the stage for the four parts that will follow. • Greet each person by name as he or she arrives • Speak with the members of the class about something going on in their lives. • Introduce the subject, passage, or key concepts for the lesson. • Present a situation out of the past week's experiences to invite the group to think about. • Focus everyone' attention on the subject with a photograph, Bible verse, or song. • Ask the participants a question about their interests, experiences, or ideas. • Brainstorm suggestions about a topic related to the main ideas of the session.	
Time	**Activity**	**Resources**
Informing	The heart of the session plan will focus on some important information about Bible passages or stories, about Christian beliefs or practices, or about some aspect of church life or history. The main ideas that the teacher has identified to be the focus will summarize the information that will be shared with the students. Presenting, this information in one or more ways will help prepare the members of the class to participate more successfully in later activities. The information must be presented in an interesting, challenging format. Presenting facts and information is important but is not the only purpose of the lesson. Some ways to engage in informing strategies are to: • Tell a story that provides background information • View a video, DVD, or PowerPoint presentation that introduces the subject • Listen to a brief, recorded presentation • Read a passage of scripture or paragraph from a printed resource • Review a series of statements about the subject of the session. • Pose a series of questions that will lead to the next part of the lesson. • Present a mini-lecture about the topic	
Time	**Activity**	**Resources**

[4] Griggs, 104-111.

Investigating	Once the class members have the information and the directions they need to pursue the subject further, they are ready to spend some time investigating the subject individually, in small groups, or as one large group. In the process of their investigation, the students begin to invest themselves in their study. As they make discoveries about the subject, they become more interested and involved and consequently motivated to learn more. Ordinarily, more class time will be spent on this part of the lesson than o the invite an inform pats because it take more time for students to explore a subject than just to present information about it. Investigating activities involve the participants with questions, issues, tasks, resources, and one another, so that they become equipped to offer their own interpretations, judgments, or conclusions. Some ways to engage in investigating strategies are to: • Choose one topic, one passage, or one issue to explore • Work with one or more resource to seek answers to a series of questions • Discuss questions and ideas with one or more other members of the class. • Search through several resources for information about a subject. • Interview a knowledgeable person about topic of the lesson. • Follow the directions on a worksheet to explore a topic. • Use a computer program to search for answers, ideas, or information.	
Time	**Activity**	**Resources**
Illustrating	It is one thing to receive or gather information about a subject and spend time investigating that information. It is something quite different to utilize that information and express it in a new way to illustrate what the information means. In this part of the lesson, the participants are encouraged to express in a creative way their own ideas, beliefs, feelings and values. They will choose from a variety of materials and methods to illustrate their personal understanding of the subject. The best resources for this part of the session are those that offer the widest possibilities for creative illustration and personal expression. Illustrating activities enable the participants to relate the subject to their own situations. And it is through these activities that teachers will be able to discern if the students have accomplished the objectives that were developed for the session. Some ways to engage in illustrating strategies are to: • Write a letter, poem, report, statement of faith, dialogue, script, or article • Use a cassette recorder to record a news report, song, drama, interview, or script. • Engage in a dramatization with puppets, dance, pantomime, role-play, or drama • Paint or draw interpretations of a scripture or Christian belief • Use a digital camera and computer to prepare a slide presentation • Create a montage ore collage to illustrate the meaning of a topic • Use transparencies, color markers, and overhead projector to illustrate ideas. • Use a computer to create a newsletter, poster, or banner. • Construct a scale mode, three-dimensional object, relief map, or other object.	
Time	**Activity**	**Resources**
Inspiring	Too often a class session concludes when the clock reaches a certain time or bell rings. Such an abrupt ending to the activities of the session means that there is no opportunity for the teacher to bring closure or draw together the main ideas of the session. Teachers often plan more than can be accomplished in the amount of time scheduled, and that means they need to be more flexible and creative in allocating time to the parts of the session. Teaching and learning are most successful when the activities of the lesson provide an opportunity for the students to leave class and live their week guided by inspiring thoughts, images, and words that express the significance of what they have spent their time studying. Some ways to utilize inspiring strategies are to: • Share illustrations created by the students, expressing what they think and believe • Sing a song or hymn reflecting the truth of the lesson • Pray brief prayers by completing an unfinished sentence • Spend a minute in silence, praying and meditating on the key theme of the session. • Decide together what actions can be taken individually or as a group • Prepare for and then experience a brief time of worship. • Speak to one another affirming and encouraging words • Challenge the students to live faithfully the truths they have studied.	
Time	**Activity**	**Resources**

Handout #5

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN
Create in me a Clean Heart: Psalms 51:1-11

Key Bible Passages: Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Focus of the session: God forgives us. God judges us. God expects us to keep the commandments. There are always consequences for every action or choice. Even though God forgives us, we still must suffer the consequences of our choices.

Objective: As a result of their participation in this session the students to be able to:

1. *Understand the definition of sin*
2. *Identify some sins that makes them feel bad*
3. *Know why it is important to ask God for Forgiveness*
4. *Explain what it means to have clean heart vs. dirty heart*

Inviting: 10 minutes

Teaching activities: Opening Prayer and Discussion of objectives:
Have the students explain in their own words what they think the word sin means. Then give a definition. (*Sin is -- doing what is wrong or not doing what is right according to God's rules)* Have them tell some sins that make them feel bad? Explain that there is a person in the Bible by the name of David in Psalms 51 who felt bad when he sinned so he asked God to forgive him and to give him a clean heart.

Resources: Class Handouts

Informing: 15 minutes

Teaching activities: Assign the students in groups of four and pass out a situation and have them select one word that could help them make the right decision, the team with the correct answer will bring it to the board. Do this a couple of times, and then explain that God will help us when we have sinned, not only by forgiving us but also by helping make the right choices. You can ask God any day, time, He is always ready to give you the joy of forgiveness.

First, explain that none of us are perfect and that all of us even the leaders in Bible times, have sinned and are going to disobey God at times and will need to ask God for forgiveness.

Second, discuss the importance and purpose of asking God for forgiveness when we feel guilty and explain that when we disobey God, or have done something wrong, we often feel guilty. Our feelings make us think that our friends, parents or God will never love us or trust us again.

Third, the Bible gives us good news when we feel guilty. First John 1:9 says "*If we confess out sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" If we confess and tell God that we are sorry for our sins, he promises to forgive us.

Resources: Situation and solutions on index cards

Investigating: 15 minutes

Teaching activities: Read Psalms 51 and find out what sin David, a great king in the Bible did and what he prayed when he sinned.

1. What are some of the words that David used with God in versus 1&2?
    a. *Mercy, Loving Kindness, Blot Out, Transgressions, Wash, Cleanse*
2. Did David confess his sins in versus 3 & 4 and if so to who did he confess his sins?
    a. *Yes, Against God*
3. What are the happy things that David asked God to give him in versus 8?
    a. Joy, Gladness
4. What did David want God to do with his heart and why in versus 10?
    a. *Clean Heart, Renew his Spirit*
5. What was David's request to God in verse 11?
    a. Cast not God Presence away
    b. Do not take the holy spirit away

Resources: Copies of the Scripture Psalms 51

Illustrating: 15 Minutes

Teaching activities: Distribute to each student some soap, clean heart and a dirty heart; have them use the soap to clean the dirt off the heart. Then have them place a piece of soap on a clean heart as a reminder that God will clean their heart from all sins.

Resources: Soap, Clean and Dirty Hearts

Inspiring: 5 Minutes

Teaching activities: Close the session in prayer recapping the importance asking God for forgiveness and keeping our hearts clean. End with prayer. Lord, we thank you for forgiving us when we sin and cleaning the dirt out of our hearts. In Jesus name, Amen.

Handou t #6

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Learning to Forgive - Joseph's Story"

Key Bible Passages: Genesis 37:12-36; 42:1-26; 45:1-15 (NIV)

Focus of the Session:

- ✓ Learn the value of being able to forgive those who may have hurt or caused them harm.
- ✓ Be able to actively take steps towards practicing the spiritual discipline of forgiveness in their lives.

Objectives: As a result of their participation in this session the learners will be able to:

1. Define forgive and its importance to relationships and emotional healing.
2. Identify the six steps which will help them forgive those who have hurt them.
3. Demonstrate what they have learned by developing a personal action plan of things they can do to assist them in moving towards being able to forgive those who hurt them.

Inviting: 10 minutes

Teaching Activities: Opening Prayer and Discussion of Objectives:

1. Participants will participate in general discussion sharing:
   a. Experiences when they have been hurt by someone (i.e., the resulting feelings, how they responded. (Chart 1)
   b. What happens when we are hurt by someone who we have been unable to forgive? (Chart 2)

2. Each particpant will write down a real life or proposed situation when they have been or could experience hurt by someone whom they feel they could not forgive.

Resources:

- **Chart 1**: When we Hurt
- **Chart 2**: When We are Unable to Forgive
- **Handout #1**: "My Story of Hurt

Informing: 15 minutes

1. Participants will be provided with a biblical definition of forgive and what is achieved when you forgive. Emphasis will be placed on restoring relationships and emotional healing as displayed in the biblical text.

2. Review and discuss handout "***The Six Steps to Help You Forgive Those Who Have Hurt You***". Participants wil brainstorm actions/things they can do during the different stages to assist them in moving towards being able to forgive.

Resources:

- **Handout #2**: Definitions of Forgiveness
- **Chart 3**: Actions/Things We Can Do To Help Us Forgive

Investigating: 5 minutes

Students will separate into three groups to explore various aspects of the text. Each group will read ***Genesis 42:1-26***, ***Genesis 37:12-36; 45:1-15***.

Group One:

Will analyze and discuss the feelings and actions of Joseph when he discovers those who have come looking for food are his brothers. Why do you think Joseph responded the way he did? How does his initial actions relate to the ability to forgive? (Genesis 42:1-26)

Group Two:

Will explore the text to determine which of the six steps to forgive did they see revealed in the text? (Genesis 42:1-26)

Group Three:

Using the definition of forgiveness as a guide the participants will explore the text to determine the relationships which were in jeopardy and what part do you think the family relationships played in Joseph's decision to forgive his brothers? (Genesis 45:1-15)
Each group will share a brief summary of their group discussion with the class.

Illustrating: 15 minutes

Each student will revisit the real life or proposed situation which they wrote down at the beginning of the lesson on the "***My Story of Hur***t":

1. Identify the value of being able to forgive in their individual situation.
2. Develop a plan of action/steps to assist them in moving toward being able to forgive

Resources:

- **Handout #3:** Personal reflection as you learned to Forgive

Inspiring: 5 minutes

Each student will share and commit to one thing/action step they will do to help them begin to practice the ability to forgive.

Handout #7

Chart 1:

Experience when you have been Hurt

Chart 2:

What Happens when we are Unable to Forgive

Chart 3:

Actions/Things We Can Do To Help Us Forgive

Handout #1

"My Story of Hurt"

_____

_____

_____

_____

Handout #2

Definition of Forgiveness

"Being able to forgive is not simply a one-time action or an isolated feeling or thought. The central goal of this practice is to reconcile, to restore communion with God, with one another, and with the whole creation."[5]

Pardoning or remitting an offense. It restores a good relationship with God, others, or the self after sin or alienation.[6]

Handout # 3

Record your personal reflection as you learned to forgive

_____

_____

_____

_____

[5] www.practicingourfaith.org. (accessed February 20, 2013)

[6] Donald K. McKim. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*

Handout #9

Websites for Children Activities[7]

Bible Quiz:

http://www. dltk-bible.com/quiz-answers. htm
http://www. cogwriter.com/quizzes
http://www.christianityoasis.com/keyword/BibleBogglers.htm

Videos:

http://www. youtube.com/watch?v=DxUmt4GG2kI
http://ebiblemovies.com
http://www. watchknowlearn.org/Category. aspx?CategoryID=3483

Arts and Crafts:

http://www. dltk-kids.com/
http://ministry-to-children.com/sunday-school-crafts
http://www. freekidscrafts.com/religious_crafts_for_kids_%7C_bible_crafts_for_kids-t64. html

Bible Games and Activities:

http://www. wartgames.com/themes/bible. html
http://us-en. superbook.cbn. com/games

[7] The above websites were accessed between January 2013 and April, 2013 for the sole purpose of illustrating where to find additional resources to assist with developing the lesson.

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